

allied

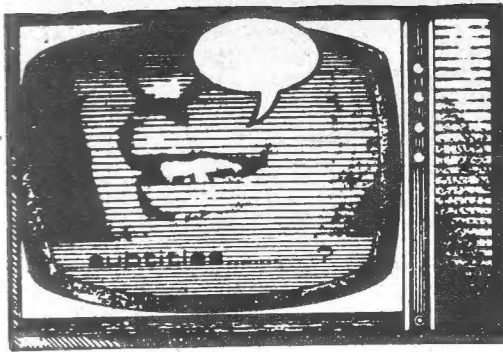


GOOD COOKING
starts with
good ingredients

PROPAGANDA 8



THE FALL, SHRIEKBACK, ANNE CLARK,
THE COMMITTEE & MORE... 30p



allied PROPAGANDA



GOOD COOKING
starts with
good ingredients...

What kinds of food have you been buying? Are you eating as well as you could in today's economic squeeze?

AUG/
SEPT
'83

And Allied Propaganda emerges, as always overdue, as always in style, whilst our wonderful democracy continues to bubble away, with 31% of the electorate opting for cack freedom imagery, nationalistic hysteria and the chance to buy there own homes - today's anaesthetic has minimal side effects. When AP 1 first emerged back in the Gary Numan infested days of May '79 there was much horror at the way in which the media decide for those with heads buried in TV, fashion and consumer regimen. Today with healthy cynicism in control and ideals held on some peripheral showcase for use when required, we try and laugh at the ignorance and gullibility, it doesn't always work, so we construct our own internal scenario to play in. Within the confines of AP there have been internal wrangles regarding 'the style of writing' and 'who we're writing for' - in this seperation of ideals, those who believe that setting such ideals sends traditional 'fanzine' honesty out of the window, continue with an influx of new staffers taking things more seriously than before - those who regard this as a valid means of communication write, those who don't ponder their alternatives...

..."There is no love in this world, anymore..." The Buzzcocks (once purchased for 50p) sing in vain to a vacant Hacienda audience, as we 'editors' smugly concoct an introduction to number eight. We are here to witness the great irony of the Fall 'living off the back of a dead man' and to celebrate the near completion of our literary toils. It comes at a time when many of the contributors (past and present) are preparing to head north to such fine cities as Liverpool, Sheffield, Manchester and Preston - the question millions are asking is what will this change of environment do to such aware and creative minds? AP 9 is due by Christmas - somesay!

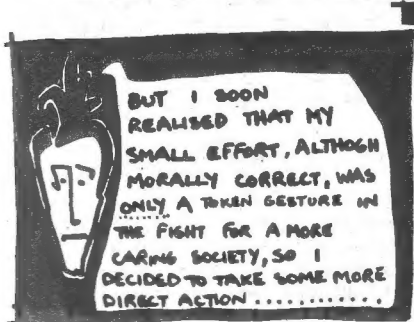
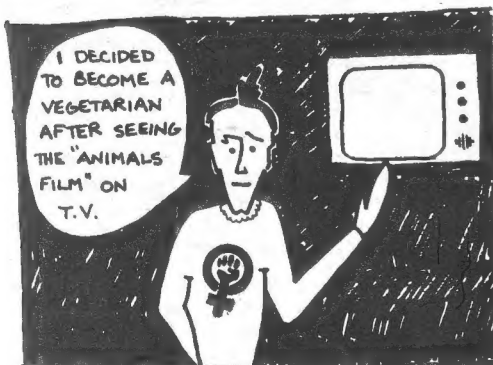
Numerous fine past Allied Propaganda artifacts currently clutter our offices and bedrooms, so cough up those pennies for issues 4,5,6 & 7. Research has indicated that AP delay can be correlated directly to these piles of unconsumed literature, so make your contribution to a speedy appearence of issue 9 and communicate to the new address;

hop
up on
that
pedestal!

ALLIED PROPAGANDA c/o
22 Bethel Estate,
Vine Lane,
Tooley Street,
Bermondsey,
LONDON SE1 2JS

COMMUNICATE....

Would You Eat
Skunks and Rats?



NEW, ALL-PURPOSE
DETERREN
PROTECT YOUR FAMILY AND HOME



If any commander of the Second World War displayed to the full the faults of his virtues, it was the American General Douglas MacArthur. Churchill, MacArthur reached the pinnacle of eminence - and in his notoriety - relatively late in his career MacArthur was appointed Commander of American forces in the Far East (1941) when he was already over 50. He had already been retired four years after a distinguished but particularly outstanding career. However, MacArthur undoubtedly possessed military genius, a grasp of strategy, superb tactical vision, foresight, all of it leavened with powerful personality and accompanying self-confidence. At the same time, he evinced demagogic tendencies, arrogance and political recklessness. All the same, the amalgam put plenty of spine into American conduct of the Pacific War. MacArthur was a master of amphibious warfare, and the imaginative creator of the island-hopping technique which was used with enormous skill. Inevitably, MacArthur's pugnacious flamboyance made him a popular figure. In this context, his promise 'I will return', made after being ordered by Roosevelt to leave the beleaguered Philippines (March 1942), has come down in the folklore of crusading phraseology. MacArthur kept his promise, in October 1944. Later, Supreme Commander of all American forces in the Pacific, he masterminded the capture of Iwo Jima and Okinawa and officiated at the formal Japanese surrender in September 1945. For five years, MacArthur 'ruled' Japan as 'uncrowned emperor' - it was an exaggeration - of post-war Japan. The Korean War, which began in 1950, proved MacArthur's undoing. He clashed with President Truman over his favoured use of the atomic bomb against the invading Chinese. There is evidence that MacArthur fancied that he was outstaging Truman whom he seemed to consider as small in character as he was in stature. MacArthur's monumental miscalculation. Truman was a powerpack of iron will and was unimpressed by MacArthur's bluff. The upshot, in 1951, was MacArthur's dismissal from Korea.

This encounter with Mark E. Smith took place on a muck ridden stairway somewhere in the business end of Sheffield's Leadmill; a venue AP'ers were more than happy to patronise, despite the contrived coziness of a vegetarian bar and alternative bookstall (MES expressed a distrust too... is this what three years on Rough Trade does to people?). Another face of the establishment was revealed by the clumsy intervention of a power mad cloth-head determined to call a halt to the brisk trade in AP (whenever such authoritarian action rears its head we always sell millions!), the judgement of the 'man-at-the-top' was sought - he was suitably apologetic and embarrassed. Aside from such trivia, every town could do with a council subsidised 'Leadmill'; provided its not 'to keep the youth out of mischief'.

Backstage the band sat as individuals, reflecting on their roles in the Fall's first British performance in 6 months; whilst Kay Carroll bubbled away in complete contrast to the dazed performers. The AP contingent stood somewhat uneasily in the dressing room doorway, until Mick spilled out some wacky 'justify-presence' drivel that served as an adequate introduction. Kay's 'What's Allied Propaganda about?' enquiry was replied to by the older staffer with all the confidence of 3 1/2 years band probing already in the bag, and with the entrance made we sat next to MES who requested that we wait a while....

Sometime later we were sat on the aforementioned staircase; MES, accompanied by his pint and a craving for a cigarette to supplement other substances, looked drained, as Mick began the interview with the early years trivia that most self respecting Fall consumers are already aware of and MES is tired of - but these were things we had to find out for ourselves...

*What is the attitude of the rest of the band regarding the way it is always you who gets dragged away for interviews?

MES: They don't seem to mind lately, although I'm always trying to push them into it. The thing is, anybody who talks to them always asks questions about the lyrics mainly. Its a basic thing, musicians haven't got anything to say, they say it with their instruments.

*It seems the Fall were more of a unit in 77/78 than they are now.

MES: Yeah, well, that's why I started doing interviews on my own, because what the rest of the people were saying was bullshit. You had Una, who was a feminist, and Friel who was a communist, and it wasn't what I was singing about.

*Did they leave on amicable terms?

No not at all.

*How do you relate to what Martin and Una are doing now in the Blue Orchids?

It doesn't strike me in any way. I think his stuff's good, but I think its thought over too much I like the singles... excuse me, I'm really pissed, well I'm not pissed but um - I've had a few since we came off and its getting to me head.

*So do you still see Martin at all?

Oh yeah, Martin. Well I see Una more, Una's alright she is... but Martin and Una got married, you know...

*Yeah well! I interviewed Martin about a year ago, and it was interesting to hear how he relates to the Fall.

I might have read that actually. (a dickhead involved-in-the-venue type wanders by) Excuse me have you got any matches?

Sorry I'm out mate.

OK pal... there's nobody in there its locked.

(a second dickhead) Are you in the band?

Yeah I am.

You played well, cheers (peace sign thrown in the direction of MES).

Thanks.

You're welcome.

*Do you feel you get across to people when you perform (a reference to the evenings strange audience reception). When you get a nucleus of people who obviously know the Fall and will stay right to the end, whereas others leave?

I was surprised actually, it was good, cos we haven't played in Britain for about 9 or 10 months. I was quite pleased the way we went on, cos we were doing stuff that we thought we



lot of it didn't work. In some ways it worked better, it was like going back a bit. There's nothing like playing in Britain (laughs, presumably at the patronising sounding nature of his comment) - dead good.

*Do you prefer playing around Lancashire?

No, no I was just saying the last time we played Britain was like I think April ('82). We went to Australia and Greece.

*What makes you play at places like that?

Well its money in a lot of ways, you know? Not just money, we could play, you know, I don't want to insult the British people, if it gets offered to you you should take it that's sort of my attitude. We had a lot of mail from Australia over the years, and although I didn't really want to go to Australia I thought we'd be the first type of band to go out there, you see the bands that go to Australia are either big superstars or bands at the ends of their careers... so we went out there and it was dead strange. It was good, good for the group.

*Did it affect your writing at all?

Yeah, it made me rethink... (interrupted by a door-trying female presumably of staff status, and the reply is lost)

Its locked that love. Have you got any matches loves?

No.

Alright.

*So, when you first began what actually started you off? You were listening to the Velvet Underground I suppose, then you got involved in, say, seeing the Buzzcocks and others... what was the initial inspiration behind your writing? The first album (Witch Trials) seemed to be a lot to do with magic mushrooms...

You think so?

*Well, yeah, (hesitantly!) Is that true or what?

It wasn't man, no...

*Or the experiences of them.

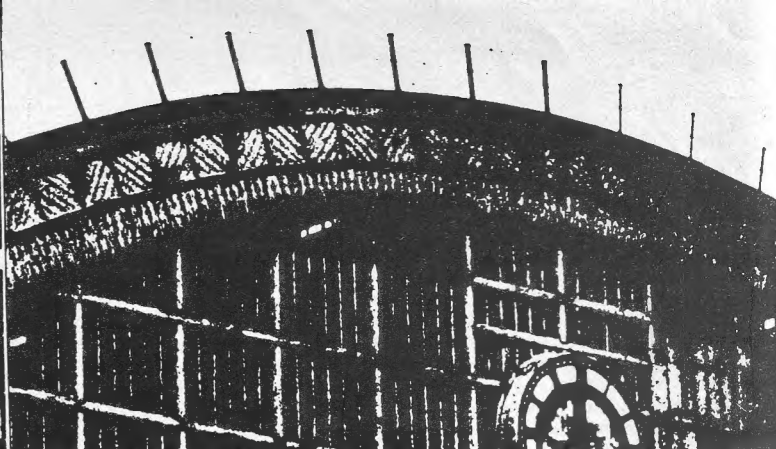
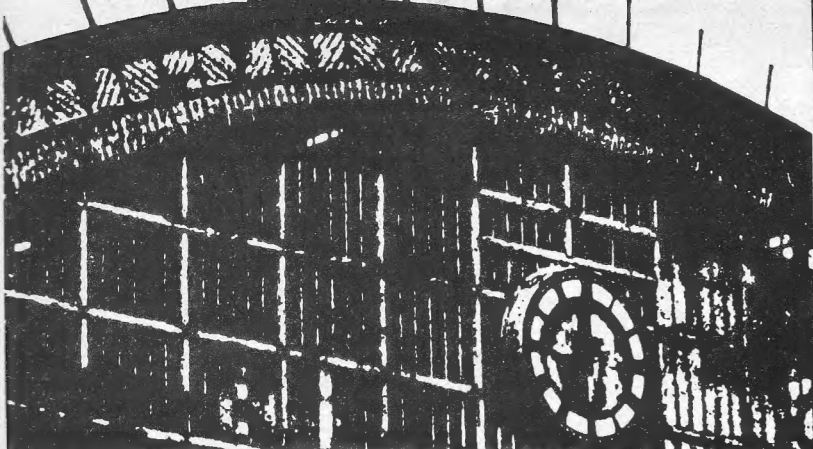
There's one or two songs with references to mushrooms and things like that... That first LP was like a statement, lyrically anyway, about things that weren't being written about, what I was doing, do you know what I mean? Even though the new wave proclaimed to be all this sort of stuff, I thought that sort of stuff should have been written about (drugs, personal interpretation of things..?) You know, like mushrooms... I wasn't saying I took mushrooms at all, I can't they make me sick; but stuff like that. It all seemed to come across to a lot of people as something out of the ordinary, do you know what I mean? That first LP also classed us as like being apart from and never wanting to be part of the business of... (more aimless wanderers arrive) You got any matches pal (once again to no avail) It was very technical music on Witch Trials, which was what I didn't like about it in a way. It was very like, er, brain stuff; I mean like, that's Braham's scene see. Y'know, me and Braham worked a lot of that stuff out. I thought it was great at the time... I still stand by it but the people really got off on that so Dagnet was, like, an answer to that. What I was trying to say on Dagnet was that it wasn't me, not really... in retrospect.

*So with Grotesque it was another completely different change of style, centred a lot around the 'Northern scene', why had that come about?

It was disgust, that's why its called 'Grotesque'.

*Disgust? With what?

Well, when Grotesque came out it was the time I recall when the Factory thing was taking off... Y'know, all these people with synth's, Grotesque was like an answer to that. That's really generalising it, but, er... A lot of people tend to forget that when I write I do it almost objectively. Like 'The North Will Rise Again' is not what I think, its what I think will happen, or won't happen, y'know, or what's going on around... its not... the fact that I'm saying.... The music press has



*Well, yeah, do you get annoyed with the way you are presented by the music press, as in NME, Sounds etc?

I think I did get annoyed, yeah... There's a penchant for history lately, I don't know what it is... (MES jokes: subtly done, indicating his thoughts on the tiresome nature of our questioning of a bands past. Pop-paper cack investigations which he does not regard as necessary because it is a way of life and the past is history, the Fall live being the definitive statement).

This is the third interview I've done today, and the second boy who was from the ABC didn't even want to do the interview, he was on a fuckin' youth training scheme and he didn't even want to do it (grins). He hadn't bought a record for three years, and he vaguely remembered the Fall from years ago. The woman who gave him the job at the BBC had said 'do an interview as though it were a fuckin' A-level or something. And he was going like 'Live At The Witch Trials - what were you trying to say on that?'... it's a fuckin' long time ago. Do you know what I mean, to me it's like dim distant past. I'm still working you see, but if you don't think that, that's alright, if you just wanna talk about the history of the group... it bores me to tears.

*Well to me there seems to be a very logical flow through your writing...

Yeah, but just because you've seen that, it doesn't mean we have to talk about it. (laughs)

*What is the Classical about, I noticed on stage tonight you ad-libbed a lot lyricwise - particularly in that song.

Well that song was written about a year ago, about what was happening then and what has resulted in the sort of music programmes you get on TV now. That's how I look at it, but that wasn't how I wrote it (an example of recurrent view of himself as a prophet) you get my drift. The sort of coyness of poetry, not vanity in a good way, not even vanity where you know what you're saying. The Classical was just like - you throw it around, you know, the only thing is where is the classical. What I was really saying in that song was that things that have any real value about them will last through any time scale. But it sounds cheap to say it like that. There was stuff like 'obligatory niggers' and that, which has like come true, and every programme you see about young people has now got a black boy in it, I have to make a joke about that... I can't help it.

(The sounds of Kay Carroll's voice drift up the stairs and transfix us for a moment, interrupting the mutual chain of thought... financial dealings)

*What are your views on the Falklands, as reflected in Marquis Cha Cha? In Helen Fitzgerald's Masterbag interview you were presented as something of an over the top patriot.

It was ridiculous that, it wasn't what I said. Marquis Cha Cha was written and recorded during the Falklands thing, it took a long time to get released, but I still stick by that song. It's about how somebody from like... extremism of like being... you know, like leafing through your magazine there's this big anti-militarism, anti-patriot thing, which is alright, what you're saying is good, but say you go to poly or something, that's drummed down your head by all your pals. The song was just taking an instance where a bloke sort of goes over to South America and works for the Argentinians, which is just as bad, do you get my drift, he's that outraged about it that he makes a fuckin' prick out of himself, which is like the story of Britain at the moment (laughter).

*In that Masterbag interview it was put across that you were totally against the anti-patriotic thing, would you consider yourself patriotic?

No, no, I was just having a joke with her cos she was Irish you see. I always notice that its Irish people who throw these questions at me... I just don't take it off Irish people you know, especially Irish people living in Britain. You always get it with the Irish, I was brought up with Irish people you see, everybody I ever knew has been Irish, all the group are Irish, did you know that, they're all got Irish mums and dads (laughs) - and Irish people always set you up, you know, they're sly. She was doing that so I was going 'Yes, everybody should join up and beat all you fuckin' paddies'... its a reaction isn't it, y'know. Like she was trying to get me to say 'England's a load of shit'; I'm English, I've got no chip on my shoulder, no black mans going to come in my home and call me the oppressor, cos if I've got any call with the English working class... the English working class created this country so that those fuckers could come over here and complain about it (concern enters our heads at the dubious nature of what MES is saying), I have no guilt about them, its only the middle class and upper middle class who have any guilt about the blacks and Irish, do you know what I'm saying? (we didn't but MES continued) and I don't like people pulling that on me. That's why I said to her, like, 'you fuckin' paddie should get back home' you see, and if you read that interview very carefully, did you read the way she was going on about the fuckin' pope, about how the pope made loads of people happy... she doesn't talk about Ireland being in a fuckin' shit state, which it is, that's why they're all over here... you see you're doubting me now because you think I'm talking like a fuckin' nazi, but its not the case, no, its true you know, I don't take it, the English working class there's no big deal to him; black people and Irish people come over here and think they're being oppressed, the English working class know that as a fact... (Mick attempted to point out that the majority of people are so content that they don't even think about being oppressed) Do you know what I mean, no black mans going to come over to me and say 'You are the fuckin' oppressor', because I've never oppressed him, as far as I'm concerned he's oppressing me, because I have to watch his music on TV and I don't particularly like it, its another way of looking at it... and she was the same, and instead of writing 'And he got very sarcastic at this point...' she writes 'he said: Everybody should go for national conscription' which I didn't fuckin' say, I don't even know what it is!

*I think black people are used in a divide and rule sense which most people aren't aware about, and that when immigrants enter a society they are sold the same dream, and all it has to offer.

Yeah, its like ex-patriot scots, every Scotsman you meet wants a fight and he wants to go on about Scotland. You go to Scotland and the people are alright, they're not violent people, they don't want to fight all the time, except in Glasgow and places like that. Its like Australia, Australia showed me a lot, you go out there and the British are the worst there, cos the British have gone out there going, 'Oh, fuckin' Britain's no good, you get a decent wage in Australia' y'know, steak's something like 20 pence a pound, and everybody eats steak all day. It means nothing to me, you meet British over there and you can understand why the Australians hate them, because they're always moaning all the time, they just wanna be like 'Big Australians'...

*How long did you go out there for?

About 6 or 7 weeks.

*I get the impression from people who've been out there, that its like some big sort of aspiring America, particularly the east coast.

Yeah, they're got that British thing... you can go on all night about that sort of stuff.



*In what way did the pope lead you to write 'Papal Visit'?

The pope is the same thing, so what, all catholics want peace.

*It was an interesting point you brought up in that Masterbag interview about Polanski, and the pope's family' refusal to let jews stay in their house...

(By this time a Fall 'fan', who had earlier sold us batteries to power the interviewing cassette machine, appeared; he proceeded to involve himself in the conversation)

Battery salesman: I thought what you said was rubbish. Just because this bloke of about 14 or 15 happened to be the son of parents who refused a jewish family.

MES: Yeah but I think its pretty telling.

BS: Yeah, but at 14 or 15, you're not going to say to your dad "Now look here dad, I could be a pope in 30 or 40 years time and this could look bad" (much chuckling)... I didn't think it was a very valid comment.

MES: Well its not my fault they put it in, I mean it was only a chat like this is... I could take your words out of context too, you know. But I stick by that, cos the polish were the biggest fuckin' jew baiters in the world, everybody knows that... I mean I know my history, its one thing I do know. The poles hate the fuckin' jews, they're the biggest fuckin' nazis on the earth (battery salesman shakes his head), they were, before the 1900's.

BS: Its just damning you know, I'm only 21 and I can only go on what you and books say, unless you live it I don't think you know.

MES: I still hate the pope, I detest him.

*Do you detest what he represents, or him as a person and the way he puts across what he represents?

MES: I think he's watering down, its like music and anything else. Its the people who water it down to try and make it popular, they're not worth anything. The catholic religion is one of the quite decent religions. I don't agree with what they say, but catholicism is alright, I think its fair and decent. He's just going around saying "stop the war, stop this, fuckin' stop that", its bullshit, anyone can say that. Its like I always equate the pope with John Lennon, I hate John Lennon. I always disliked him intensely, but when he got shot it turned to hate, do you know what I mean? I think it came out then. People like that deserve to get shot, I wish someone would shoot the pope. What is he saying? You turn the TV on everynight and its just, y'know... people go on about South Africa, but this pope he's alright, everybody thinks he's alright.

BS: He never commits himself.

Exactly, he's saying nothing. How it affected me was that he came to where I live which is a village in Manchester. He came like within... where I was living you could see the fuckin' park, in this park they had all these great victorian railings, y'know, round the bogs, and all these big fences; and they got fuckin' Wimpeys in, I mean its like almost a joke, and that really strikes home. They just ripped everything out, and all the grass they just put all this stone over, they had bulldozers in and they ploughed the fields to fuck, and had all these barriers round. Then the boy comes in on a helicopter, and it was like I'm watching it on the telly and I'm lookin' out my window. Where I live its a big deal, I look out of the window and there's all these families, millions of them, just walking with prams, like there's one woman with eight prams and the other kids are pushing prams. You know, they've done the trip over from Ireland and all this, it was disgusting you know, all throwing rubbish in your garden. I had to laugh about it. But we went up there, and it was great, cos all these jewish guys - because where I live

its half jewish half catholic - had brought like 10 thousand cans of coke; the thing was only about a quarter of the people they thought would turn up turned up, which I thought was great. There were like these fuckin' rubbish heaps of sandwiches, which people had hoped to make a fortune out of, all thrown away. And we went round the park after midnight, there was all these people, like drinking and getting pissed, y'know, having it off with each other, its ridiculous, it means nothing, just like a bloody rock concert. It could have been Rod Stewart. That's what he sees, and the more of it he sees, the more it flattens his ego. He reminds me of those priests in american films, like Spencer Tracey, y'know.

*Is it the vivid things like that, which wind you up that inspire you to write?

BS:(interrupts) What is 'Papal Visit', it sounds a total mess to me.

MES: Its a total mess!?? (astounded)

BS: Yeah, I thought I'd be able to get into it after about 10 plays but I can't.

MES: I'm very proud of it. Now you know the detail behind it you might like it a little better (emulates the tone of a famed jaded artist answering his critics) I think its the best thing on the whole fuckin' record.

*What's 'Joker Hysterical Face' about? The line about Ted Rodger's brains burning in hell is hilarious.

MES: Well its about a couple who live sort of downstairs from us, where we were living, and they used to play like Abba and that stuff, they always used to have it on full blast. She was a divorcee, I used to know women like her, and its not very far from the feminist movement and all that sort of stuff. Like the man is the main thing to blame. Which is like a lot of other things going through british society at the moment. Its kind of generalising, but its what I felt when I wrote that.

*Your attitude to feminism is similar towards....

MES: No...its not to do with me, its just that when anything like that becomes, like, standard then you know something's up. Its only the same as all the fashion values. That's what I don't like about it, y'know...You play a polytechnic and its really bad...like with people coming up to you - and like, they're being taught by left wing lecturers - and they come up to you and go "Why are you in a group? Are you in it for the money?" y'know, its all standard stuff... its very dangerous. I'm very down on the left wing at the moment, and I'll say that straight to you, I don't care what anybody says.

*Why's that? Because of the unthinking way people adopt such values or what...

MES: Its revolting, y'know...because its been taken over by people who can't operate within the state. But what they want is like a state government. All the people, like where I come from its a big labour stronghold and all the people are into it... they're not the ordinary people, they're the people who have been educated, and they all work in't mental hospital, y'know, fuckin' shoving tranquilisers down people's necks. (the 'Psycho-Mafia')... non of them have got fuckin' proper jobs, they all work for the fuckin' government along the line y'know...There they are going on about the fuckin' SWP and pulling the fuckin' government down, and it just gets me sinister. Its just like they wanna replace the self-made fatso with themselves, with no fuckin' like, inclination to do anything. I only do anything when I'm under pressure, y'know, its a simple fact of life. You must do the same...I'm lucky, I'm within a group, I don't have to do a lot of things under pressure, but I do have to do things I don't wanna do.

*So when you say you're 'down on the left' its because of the people behind it...

MES: Basically, I don't think everyone is equal, and I'll stand by that. I'm envious of a lot of people and I feel superior to a lot of people...

* Yeah, well I do as well, but I think I've been able to see through the shit whereas the situation is such that the majority of people have no desire to, and are living a reality that is not their own...(I attempt to continue saying its the current set of conditions that set people off against each other from birth, but MES interrupts).

That's very good of you, that's a very Papal thing to say, (a sarcastic reference, presumably at what he considers to be a grandiose statement by myself) Christianity and Socialism are exactly the same things you know. They're dead the same, I've seen it too many fuckin' times. Its like when we play, you get people just walk in the dressing room, I mean not like you two walked in, they just walk in and think...you play a polytechnic, and they go in and go, "Oh, pop stars!", you know, these guys are really obese, and that's the new fuckin' generation! They're being told by some frustrated fucker that everybody's equal and all that...and I don't fuckin' believe it. I've never thought that. People used to knob me around when I was at school...but I didn't feel inferior to them, it made me. I'm not going to blame it on me thin arms, that'd be a pathetic excuse, wouldn't it though? And there's a lot of people that turn out like that, like there's people around where I live who just because they haven't got a fuckin' job sit around smokin' dope all day...and drinkin'; you ask them how much they get a week and they're getting the same as I am...almost. I'm not much better off than them. It doesn't bother me. But then they give you this fuckin' rap about how hard off they are, because they see it on TV, because they're educated that way, because they're taught to feel inferior. It's bad fuckin' news, y'know...I mean, I want money, but I'm not gonna make a fuckin' dick out of myself to get it.

BS: If things started looking up for the Fall, and I think you're about they only band who I don't think will ever change, and I've got total belief in you (!). If you started getting more money, or more press coverage or whatever...

MES: Oh yeah, I mean we can get money you know, we do get money.

BS: I just wondered if you could sit there with a sort of straight face, and still say the same things you're saying...

MES: Oh yeah, more than ever. You know its them sort of people who are the ones that don't fuckin' help you out when you're really...I mean I'll tell you the truth now, we're absolutely skint, we don't know where the next week's wages are coming from. I mean like three months back we were alright, not comfortable, but we didn't have to worry about that for a couple of months. Them fuckers are the ones that criticise you, its just human nature, its not even worth talking about...(manic laughter). It does come out in my work anyway.

BS: I think its human nature to think you're at the bottom, I think you've got more than you think.

MES: That's exactly what I'm saying, its dead cosy y'know, I mean like Rough Trade were ringin' us up and telling us how bad off they were for money. They really do, and Rough Trade do it, and every record company do it. I never ring people up to tell them that I'm fuckin' skint, y'know - "I'm sorry this interview wasn't so good, er, I'm a bit short of money at the moment (smiles)", its the most degrading thing...

* What are the most important things to you... I mean most people are taught that money is all there is, and accept it.

MES: Is money the most important thing to you? (MES appears surprised at the sudden 'soul-probing' nature of my question)

* No, but I'm living in a society where I need a certain amount to exist.

MES: Yeah, but it doesn't bear thinking about does it for fucks sake.

* I know, but what do you regard as truly important? In the same way that others hold money as important - making idiots out of themselves to get it.

Yeah, but they don't know they're making idiots out of themselves when they're doing it do they? (MES tries to avoid the main question and a lengthy pause transpires).

*So what things do you value? (persisting)

It's not to fuckin' throw around like now is it? (an air of mild disgust is evident in his intonation and there is a long somewhat embarrassing silence which the AP contingent are adamant not to break...for full effect)

Eventually the battery salesman interrupts the 20 second silence with an enquiry about the band's forthcoming date in Newcastle).

* What is the situation with Kamera?

Rough Trade's attitude was like a major label attitude, the fact that they had the yea or nay, but RT had no fuckin' taste they're just a bunch of, like, commune people (again MES illustrates his aversion to 'commune' ethics). So we'd get like people and these groups listening to acetates of our stuff that even we hadn't heard. And like anyone could go in there and say "Could I interview the Fall" and they'd say "Oh, yeah, yeah!", and you'd get like all the NME and that regardless, y'know. We'd get a boring Graham Locke interview and Graham Locke is, like, a boring stuttering socialist who wants to talk about women's groups all the time, and that's what Rough Trade is, and that's why we left them. That's why they've got the Blue Orchids, you know the Blue Orchids are a bunch of handicaps (I laugh - a mixture of disbelief and dissent), no they are, they're a lot of fuckin' handicaps, I've played with these people. They're great musicians, but as people Rough Trade is perfect for them, like Scritti Politti, they're hopeless...people want to be in college for the rest of their lives, y'know, fair enough; whereas Kamera, I mean, we haven't even talked to Kamera for a month, they rang us up yesterday and that's it. We only contact them when we want to bring a record out.

BS: So if you want something, its not a question of them coming to you, but a question of you going to them?

MES: Yeah, but we don't stay with record companies that long to get that sort of relationship (manic laughter on the part of MES).

* Do you listen to much music, I mean a lot of musician's say "Oh, I haven't got time", you know people like Paul Weller, he just reals off his latest selection of 60's soul artists...

MES: (interrupting) He was on radio 1 today, yeah, radio 1 are having a contest where all unemployed people write in wierd poems. Paul Weller was on saying "Listen to this poem called 'Lipstick & Lager' which won like ten quid or something... (MES suddenly laughs at his own digression)...it just surprised me that's all....carry on...What stuff do I listen to, Oh loads of stuff, Panther Burns I like, I enjoy them, they're great and um (pause)... I listen to records all the time actually lately. I moved into this house, we used to be in a really confined little place, but I moved into this place that's got this really high ceiling, its really freezing, but we've got this stereo and the sound bounces off walls, its really good (laughs at what he's saying).

* Do you get any ideas or inspiration from the music you listen to?

MES: No I don't actually, I don't listen to music like that anymore, but I think its bad not to listen to music apart from just your own stuff. I always try not to listen to my own stuff where it gets to the point, like tonight where I forget lyrics of songs that we've recorded.

* Why don't you make your lyrics readily available? They're obviously important.

MES: I don't know really (not really listening to the question, but trying to think of music he's currently listening to; he laughs at his inability to do so)...I was making it up I didn't want to seem like anyone else (mocking himself in an affected voice, persumably of a jaded rock-star)...Frank Zappa! (eventually he recalls a name) yeah right, Frank Zappa's got this double LP out, you must listen to it at least, its called 'You Are What You Is', I think its his latest LP. Its, like, all these three minute songs about americans, its a really horrible LP but its really good to listen to though, cos its just like what americans are like the moment, there's this song called 'I Don't Wanna Get Drafted' its really good (sings song title in an exentuated Zappa voice).

* Getting back to the question of your lyrics... I mean what happens if someone writes of to Kamera and asks for lyrics to a song?

MES: Those letters go straight in the bin actually (laughs), we do these print-out sheets that I type with snatches of lyrics on them. Its not worth the time and energy for me to do it you know. (Mick was reminded of the time he saw the lyrics to 'New Face In Hell' in Smash Hits of all places, probably down to Rough Trade - MES probably new nothing about it!)

(...Numerous Venue-types arrive en-masse, mumbling about giving each other lifts home)

MES: Have you got any matches in there? (to the people attempting to open the locked door)...what's the company board-room like? C'mon let's have a look in there, bet it is (the door to the locked room is finally opened) Yeah, it is!! I knew it was...Oh, so what club you gonna take over next? (MES wanders in to investigate the 'board-room'. Distracted from the conversation he returns to terminate things a few seconds before the tape takes likewise action). Right, is that enough? I'm fuckin' off now....

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DAMAGE
BLON AT
CEMETRY
ADVERTISEMENT

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DEATH
ORPHANS
NEW HOME
BOY (9)
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*"Your attitude towards Feminism is similiar towards..(MES:) No...It's not to do with me; it's just when anything like that becomes standard you know something's up." An example of an attitude that has gained a wide ranging acceptance and is generally considered 'good'; the point being that one must challenge everything to one's own standards and never let anything pass through because of external pressures (eg. popularity, fashionability, etc.). It's all about the personal responsibility to challenge things that often go unquestioned, the extra risk involved (as far as Smith is concerned) lies in these things that already have some sense of 'acceptability' of righteousness, if you like; such a dangerous path could only be trod by the leather-skinned Smith, risking instant dismissal from the modern day 'liberal'.

"THE FALL and our apologies..." (The Authors write)

* Smith often says things that are very open to interpretation and his frequent 'y'know's' serve as a genuine enquiry into your understanding of his words.

* Remember that the first Fall material was conceived in conjunction with the 'small label' and its inherent idealism, deliberately constructed like a free press, to counter the dictatorial path to profit of the 'majors'. Nowadays, particularly in light of the recent Rough Trade debacle, one doesn't take that sort of thing for granted! (another cynic)

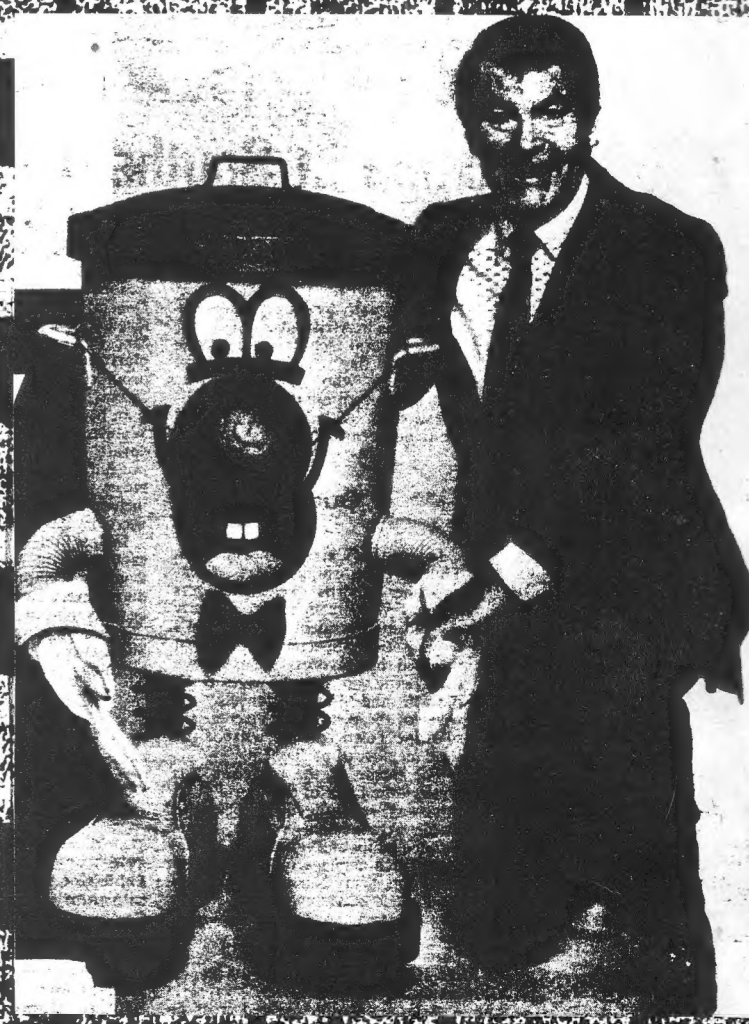
*"The music press has a lot to answer for, y'know." A sense of resignation at the position the press have engineered for themselves, contaminating and asserting at whim into those gullible heads the pet journalistic theories of 'intellectual interpretation' that attempt to reseal the cornerstones already laid by the bands (relevant bands, that is!)

* Smith never spells out his true meanings, as though he was giving a total liberty for the individual interpretation. Even when treading over 'dangerous' ground, eg. over race, feminism or pacifism, he exerts a natural ambiguity.

*"Marquis Cha Cha": Bloke goes and works for Argentinians during last year's government exercise, outraged to work for the 'enemy' as a stand against his own country's patriotism.. a warped Lord Haw Haw adaption with a twist! It's this sort of allegory with the inimitable Smith flavouring that entices (and thrives on) criticism from all sides, with no solution offered - only another individual interpretation aired. It is our mistake to expect to be able to value one particular person's view just because he or she is in a band.

* Helen Fitzgerald's 'Masterbag' interview uses Smith's ambiguity to her own ends. Her ears are pricked at an English 'public figure' (!) voicing off at the war fever and Smith plays into her hands, despite the fact that the song shows a cynical and wary approach to both patriotism and anti-patriotism in their worst extremes.

* Smith continually expresses a distrust of 'fashionable politics' and their potential affects. The blinking of the individual in the college credibility race (remember all those bright red Marx T-shirts strutting around celebrating Karl's death ?!). The dangers Smith leaves himself open to are obvious.



* To do Smith justice, one must print our conversation in its entirety to give maximum room for the reader's interpretation, an integral part of his tactics. His ability to provoke relevant thought is second to none; yet certain things that were said aroused concern during and after the conversations, particularly Smith's generalisations that trod a thin line between validity and negative prejudice. A second meeting is planned.



T.V.

TRANQUILLIZING THE MASSES?

THANK
GOODNESS
FOR THAT!
FATHER'S LOST
CONSCIOUSNESS

PLEASE, FATHER
---FOR YOUR OWN
SAKE ---TRY TO BE
TRANQUIL!

Recently discussing Coronation Street, the question arose as to its realism, "How many of the characters are on the dole?" We then generally agreed that excepting the languorous Suzy Burchill and an occasional non-de-script extra, the majority of the permanent residents were unquestionably employed. Supposedly set in the Salford district - one of high unemployment - the picture presented of quaint, working-class existence, is therefore untrue. Spoonfeeding the masses trivial contentment? - There is no need to force-feed, they are clamouring for it. "In general, people look not for new experience in the mass media but for a repetition and elaboration of their own experiences, into which they can more easily project themselves." (Lazerfeld) Education is rejected in preference for passive pulp, brimming with stereotypes. Reality tastes bitter, so, egged on by the media, they demand human frailty without the warts (Coronation Street), Liberal comfort without the sweat (Brookside and the dire Crossroads) and sex without the squelch (Dallas). The popularity of the 'soaps', along with lobotomy-fodder like '321' proves there is an avid market for the cotton-wool worlds without unemployment, racism and sexism (blatant) and where wads of lucre and holidays in torrid Torremelenos, are forced into grasping, clammy hands.

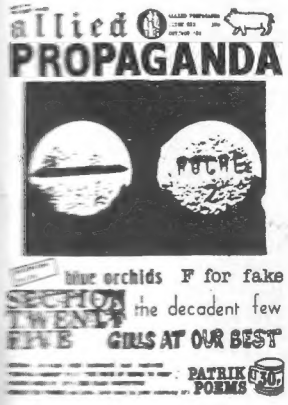
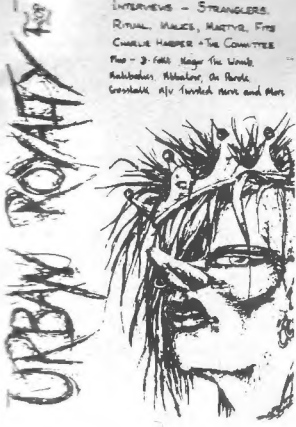
Invariably, the inhabitants of these worlds are pitifully bland, one-dimensional and without ambition (exempting the usual aspirations towards consumer and middle-class trappings.), perhaps why, a recent hagmag voted Hilda Ogden the fourth most popular woman in Britain - after the Queen, Queen Mother and insipid Princess Di (Do these people hold equity cards?). Personally I'd like to see an exploration into the infinitely more interesting lives of the people behind the facades: - BAGGY BET, STARKERS IN SPAIN!, LUSTY LEN EXPOSES PLUMBLING TO POOL NYMPIETS or even BORING BERT CAUGHT LOITERING IN GENTS. Far more amusing and entertaining (for that is the prime lust of the hedonist public) are the whimpering pleas of the axed-grinders:- Noele Gordon - heroine of a thousand Woman's Realm readers, "All those loving years I gave..." It's fine to take Coronation Street and its ilk at their true value - entertaining, glossed-over parodies of life, but, too often and for too many people, it becomes a pattern for living - Utopia. Is it possible to distinguish between events like the shooting of J.R. or the Ken and Deidre affair and the royal wedding or even the Election? For many I think not.

TV needs a good stir up to expose such indistinction. I hear Ken and Diedre are buying a house in Brookside, Benny's emigrating to Southfork and David Hunter's found his true vocation - in a Burtons shop window.

-Jane



INTERVIEWS - STRANGERS
RURAL VALUES, MATURE, FIVE
CHARLES HANDELL - THE COMMITTEE
Plus - 3 Fall Major for World
Rubbish, Mollusks, de Rinde
Goshawk, My Turkish Arts and Arts



WHAT THE PAPERS SAY:

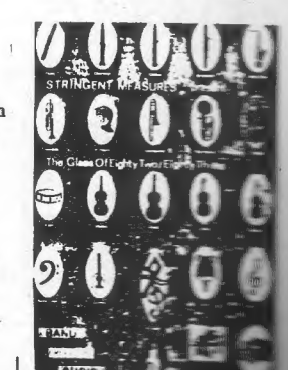
Today there are more fanzines trying to grab the ever dwindling attention of the discerning record consumer than ever before; add to this the fact that the days of hippiness attached to a particular product (and to fanzines generally) are over, and you have a market saturated with a lot of literary goodies that the irrepressible youth awareness(!) never comes into contact with.

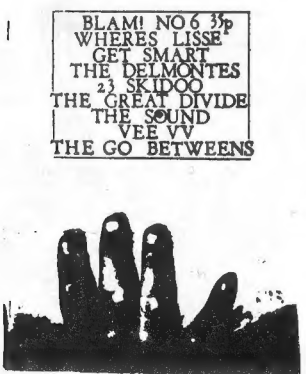
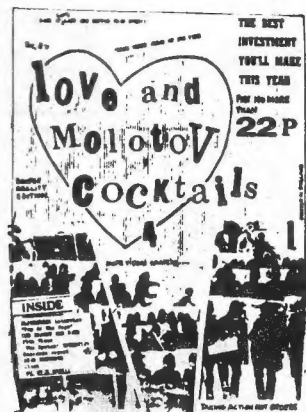
If the prevailing attitude is one of almost parental conservatism with regard to such publications, it is an attitude that is shared by record outlets as well. As the clean, clinical, chain outlets of Virgin, Our Price, HMV and Co. cut one another's throats for business, the independent shops get trampled underfoot. Even the relative stability of Rough Trade appears to have crumbled, with the shop operating on a shoe-string of a budget - a separate entity from the more profitable label. The thing with the independent record shop was not only that they took fanzines and the music they sold seriously, but, on a more romantic note, you could actually speak to the staff without buying a record! With our current aspiring multinationals, records are profit, and fanzines are a pain in the backside; - the staff consist of a selection of handpicked 'ask no questions and we'll pay you for it' individuals, who when hassled to take a fanzine or something they regard as out of the ordinary, bleat about the fact that they can only do what head-office tells them to. This is the face of the post-punk record outlet, for a long time the retail industry has known that people consume more ravenously when completely alienated, today music is marketed in the same way. Enough of the pessimism, you can't crush honesty I say, so despite the continued efforts of IPC and businessmen everywhere, great things will always be; read on:

Vague 13 predictably stopped me in my tracks when I spied it, simply because of its habit of being one of the best. As always its in a world of its own (both metaphorically and spiritually!) - this time around its crammed full of Tom Vague and a cast of thousands' rantings about themselves, Southern Death Cult, Sex Gang Children and lengthy reviews of last summer's WOMAD and Glastonbury festivals, incorporating the Vague party line on hippies...! Yes, Vague has a code of ethics all of its own in terms of layout and writing style - besides, you can usually tell a good fanzine nowadays by whether or not it contains an Oi! pisstake. The Sounds perpetrated farce may be fuelled by the glorification of violence, gumbie nationalism and has no doubt dealt out a fair number of physical beatings to a lot of unfortunate people; but its certainly provided fanzines with their equivalent to the cack press and last years Falklands stunt. (30p from Tom and his Vagrants at 'Butcombe', Castle Street, Mere, Wiltshire). Another fanzine with periodical Oi! pisstakes and generally bubbling in satire is Panache - after devoting a little too much time to the ailing Zig Zag, Mick Mercer has returned with issue 22 in tow. After a dull start; a Danse Society interview of the nothing added/nothing taken away variety which goes overboard on the past, present and future plans of the band, we get to some real meat from the Mercer head. The editor indulges in a touch of philosophising(!) centred around some excellent finger-on-the-pulse regarding the soul less 'weeklies' writers, and a hilarious 'Bands I dont like/hate' rant - we also have a brief reference to the Mercer theory 'once an Oi dickhead, always an Oi dickhead'. Worth it for this alone as they are wont to say, this is our Mick at his best, but hang on... there's more, still in justifiable hypercritical role our hero lunges at the weak foundations of AP7, poor layout etc. Other highlights and a half include a marvellous dig at Tony D and some pseudo-Karouak indulgent 'travels around europe' article he wrote - only the remnants of savage Mercer editing remain! There's also an article on the Ninja, Japanese gents of old, real supermen of the martial arts variety who went around killing people with great panache! (it all sounds a bit far fetched to me). Yes, the amusement lasts and lasts, and by the time the last of the 34 pages is turned you're still gliding along in the realms of hilarity. (30p from Mick Mercer 129 Clare Road, Stanwell, Staines, Middx).

Cool Notes a pretty average collection of pages is saved by moments of true, sometimes inadvertant inspired genius - issue 4 is based around the awesome concept of 'Celebrities in Clacton' and contains a collection of views, presented with a degree of clumsiness (some would say naivety, but they'd be wrong) on racism, fashion and CND that incorporate some overlooked points. As always the musical scribbles on soul (the gospel + blues hypothesis in no.4) are refreshing and informative, and the trad band interview structure is generally ignored. Issue 5 (Cool Notes is so frequent that 6 is probably already in existence!) has got a grinning goat on the cover and we're encouraged to believe that our 20p also covers the cost of the incorporated Goat News! There's also an interview with the Alarm (who seem to be held in high regard by a number of 'zines) which is a bit bland, and elsewhere an enlightening piece on Attila the Stockbroker including his historical adventures in Brighton and Belgium, and ensuing rise to fame, fortune and appearances on 'Whatever You Want'. As part of Cool Notes' attempts at linguistic education of its readership there's a page entitled 'How to make a prat out of yourself in German' where the reader is encouraged to make noises that may one day be useful: "Is the road to Garmisch snowed up?" - "Ist die Strasse nac Garmische zugeschniet?", don't forget to raise your voice after an interrogative. French students should refer to CN4.

Most fanzines usually mention the other stapled products that amuse or inspire them, but in Adventures In Reality issue K (40p from Alan 56 Cheval Ave, Radford, Coventry) 3 pages of reduced type have been set aside for notes and addresses of over 80 fanzines; a comprehensive listing to say the least - with American, Italian and Norwegian addresses to boot, it would have made more lively reading if the comments were a bit more extensive, although Alan's comments about the missing presumed dead AP did amuse me; no doubt the lateness of this issue will result in 'let us down again' comments and associated death rumours! Also hiding-twixt the pale yellow vomit coloured covers are bits on the Toronto, German, French and Norwegian music scenes; the latter a comprehensive examination of all that is happening in the land of fjords and coniferous forests, which would appear to be a great deal, even if the desire to emulate the british punk lark of '77 is a common and pointless attitude. A & R is one of those zines that usually contains at least one postal interview, something I'm averse to because it allows the band in question to say (or write) things they wouldn't if a critical ear and tape recorder were present, that said, the bit on Audio Leter aroused interest and I'll be looking forward to getting hold of a copy of the tapezine that Alan is working on. The latest issue of Blam (6) contains a couple of the aforementioned postal communique interviews and after past efforts number 6 is a bit of a let down. There's a good Sound interview and a thorough poke through recent fanzines and tapes, which goes hand in hand with an account of a 'DIY cassette maniac' which



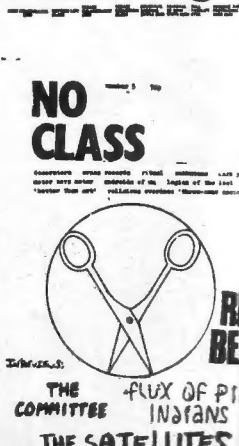
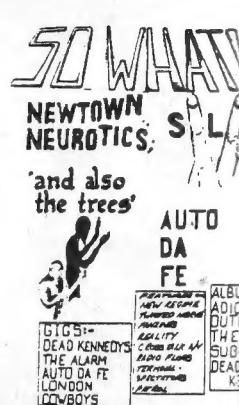


Division obscurities reminded me of all those boneheads paying extortionate prices for coloured vinyl copies of records they already had back in '78 - c'mon Pete, up with those socks.

Closer to home, infact only a 140 bus separates us, are the scribes of Urban Royalty who've recently given rise to their farewell product - UR4. Apparently Steve and cohorts reckon they've done on a local level but there are vague rumours (that is vague AP rumours!) that another zine is likely to spring up as a means for the airing of frustrations, opinions, humour etc. In number 4 there's a good Strangers interview by Kim, Jet Black claims they never regarded themselves as a punk band (which I very much doubt) but goes on to devolve suss re. the pope & Falklands; JJ Burnel enters clutching a dog and vaffles about cannibalism and the fact that Crass hate 'em. The Committee would have stolen the show had they been given more than a page to spill their heads onto, along with the Malice vaffle the two most valid Harrow bands get a chance to say good things. Elsewhere Martyr and Ritual are represented by a couple of inconsequential interviews, and for some reason neither of the bands feature on the second UR Harrow compilation tape ('Going Garrity In The Urban Zone') - reviewed elsewhere. As well as the expected extensive local coverage there are also bits on 'provincial peripherals' inc- Crosstalk A/V, Antibody, D-Fekt, Hagar The Womb and the Fits. Charlie Harper even gets a look in, and I thought he'd gone back to hairdressing.

Oh dear! No Class 5 opens with Graeme in defeatist ranting state of mind; yes its true that there's "no appeal in listening to morons thrashing gibsons and shouting dumb obvious words about pubs", but there's got to be something at the shit end of the beaufort scale of musical validity, it may be a bit overcrowded at the moment and there may be a lot of decent music being created by a lot of egotistical shit heads, but there's still a lot of inspirational genius creeping about. There are lengthy interviews with Flux Of Pink Indians and Red Beat as well as the Satellites, a real dullsville caper - with them still entrenched in 1979 mud. Also present and correct in smallish doses are the Committee, Ritual, the Decorators, Subhumans and the Androids of Mu. No Class appears to be suffering from severe dull artwork syndrome, but with the appropriate medication number 6 should be back to its old self. Apocalypse is yet another fanzine that hails from the desperate depths of West London suburbia. Issue 2, an erratically printed 36 page affair, comprises largely of Warren's wanderings through the numerous independent cassettes currently available, along with numerous one page intro articles on unknown bands. Unfortunately these 'all very basic' encounters seem to devolve little more than the dull: 'date of formation, influences, line-up and potted histories' - Fear of Falling, Strange Days, Religious Overdose, Adventures In Colour and Cleaners From Venus - all get similar treatment; only Slough "punkerists" Death Pop's brief encounter manages to transcend the normal approach. Dead or Alive's guitarist Wayne Hussey, dug out by Warren on a visit to Liverpool, manages to be as uninteresting as most of the other characters & aspiring heroes making noises in the aforementioned city. Despite the criticisms, Apocalypse has a constant unabashed honesty, Warren never falls into the "I can't say that" pretentiousness that often rears its head, and his brief statements on sexism, religion, fashion and vivisection (topics that may have been covered a hundred times before) are never the products of detachment or hip obligation. (30p from Warren 83 Wiltshire Ave, Slough, Berkshire.) Tongue In Cheek like Apocalypse currently resides on issue 2 with 3 due to burst forth before this issue of AP does. Valid bits on the Three Johns and 1919 (- lots of activity to write about in Yorkshire these days) and a lengthy informative article on a host of independent cassettes, are marred by the unquestioned TIC policy of covering any band who shoves publicity blurb in their direction - to the extent of unashamedly reprinting such 'here are our credentials' leaflets. Thus the Hates, Texan boneheads of dubious lyrics and single-moulded-into-ashtrey fame, get a bit of reasonable coverage. (Ian, 10 Manse Crescent, Burley-in-Warfedale, Ilkley, Yorkshire. 30p). Molotov Comics is another stapled Yorkshire product, put together by Seething Wells and others, it contains a diverse selection of poems accompanied by some good, bad and ugly graphics. S.Wells and contributors write some intelligent and astute stuff, that undoubtedly is most effective when slung in the direction of mob-mentality audiences. Seeing it laid out all very nicely and complemented by nothing else but similar observations and graphics is as effective as ranting at smug intellectual audiences who arn't inspired by it, or threatened by it, but laugh increasingly louder as they drink more (such are the events I have witnessed - negativity!) (30p Flat 3b Belle Vue House, Belle Vue Road, Leeds). A variation on the molotov - as in peeved - idea is Love and Molotov Cocktails, the name derived from that oft sung and spun Flys classic of what seems like yonks ago. Its put together by Dave Hurt from Stoke, who claims on the cover: 'The best investment you'll make this year'. It suffers from a touch of the 'bands saying nowt in interviews' syndrome, not only that but the Bright Red Band chatter is virtually impossible to read. Despite this there is some good stuff twixt covers; an on the ball look at TOTF, which is successfully disposed of in an original fashion, and a review of Chris Mullin's 'A Very British Coup'. The book (held in high esteem by the political 'left') points out, albeit through fiction, that Britain is as much a political satellite of the USA as Poland etc are of the USSR: the fact is that this has always been a chain of awareness in the alert mind, and that the vast majority would have difficulty in acknowledging this sort of thing even if it was serialised between breasts and sport in the Sun; once again the choice is vote for who you are told to, or stay at home reclining in insight and let others do it for you! the political set up in our green and unpleasant land has enough preservative and artificial colouring to keep it going forever. Over the page there's Dave's 'written on the M6' look at the Hacienda (add accents according to taste) incorporating into his observation that the Hac bears a remarkable resemblance to Hilton Park services - to me its an exclusive TOTF type studio for those who think life is about style, New Order and nothing else. (write to Dave H. 25 The Fairway, Alsager, Stoke-On-Trent. 22p).

Black Dove produced by Dave (of the remarkable, apparently one off Antigen) and the Black Dove collective, is similar to his other writing in that its essentially anarchy/peace orientated and written with insight, experience and earnest. The A5 mag (reduced from the standard A4 size) contains articles on the bomb, Falklands, Greenpeace and Animal Liberation. The only music orientated bits are reviews of Vice Squad at an Exeter gig that exploded into violence with the band turning a blind-eye to the goings on, there's also an amusing bit on the Glastonbury CND doodah - who in 77 would have dared say the word Glastonbury, let alone write articles about it! (25p from Box 6, FreeWheel Bookshop, 52-54 King Street, Norwich, Norfolk) Another A5 affair, worlds apart from Black Dove, but just as valid, is the unique and hilarious Little Whimper, which I plucked from RT simply because of its claim on the cover: 'virtually none of the material contained herein is original and probably infringes copyright. All correspondence



allied PROPAGANDA

the slits
THE PASSIONS
GLAXO
BABIES
BABIES

KILLING JOKE
THE RAINCOATS

PATRIK FITZGERALD



URBAN ROYALTY N°3
25p

Action Pack
PULSE
RADIO
ADIES

with regard to legal proceedings should be addressed to Mike Adock, Bedford Rd, St Albans, Herts." - the original artists are probably all dead or too embarrassed to acknowledge their work. Ye Olde Worlde adverts that bring a tear to the eye, a Victorian Era article on 'abnormal sexual activities' (sort of stuff Thatcher once lectured the children on), a memory test and a dig at vegetarians fill the 8 pages of lovable crap. Paradise Lost also owes its existence largely to the garbage printed in the tabloids. Thatcher's mug and royal family classics (the Queen Mum looking more of a veg than ever) are thrown together with sex accessory cut ups and the oft used war atrocity pics to form effective collages; more so than my clinical list would suggest, especially where coupled with lyrical statements. In contrast with the now common use of collage is a brilliant observation of the nuclear family as a prison of obligation and dishonesty... "The child does not understand, the adult does not want to understand. So the adult teaches the child to understand it should not want to understand. This is called growing up. Avoid it where possible." (30p c/o 110 Cheltenham Road, Bristol 6) Kiss The Earth is a similar collection of 12 pages collage and writing concentrating on the con of consumerist reality - "unemployed people: refuse the media depression. Use your time and your life wisely", (write to Lee c/o Hyde Park Towers Hotel, Inverness Terrace, London W2). Alternatives to Valium was bought on a recent foray over the border. Flicking through the pages a composition/article by the Fall was in evidence and enough reason to warrant 35p. Mark E Smith introduces the concept of a YOP fanzine writer and a Sainsbury conspiracy, amongst a selection of lyrical snippets and near illegible scrawlings. Opposite, bassist Stephen Hanley has his letter and enclosed opinions on Fall activities published. For those who hold another Smith (Robert) in high esteem, there's a lengthy interview on his forthcoming plans - it would seem that he considers the Cure to have finished its useful life. The man is found talking a lot of sense, quite the opposite from the article's intro, where the writers feel obliged to justify the Cure's existence in relation to their position in the NME reader's poll - their conclusion is that they have a large body of "dedicated fans". What a horrendous fucking concept. (35p from 36, College Bounds, Old Aberdeen, Aberdeen) The last issue of Stringent Measures was a Glass Records special, which at first sounds pretty unhealthy, although the label has a spectrum extending from the valid commotion of the Cravats to the quieter, melancholic meanderings of In Embrace, the articles concentrate mainly on the latter. A fair amount of space is well wasted; a page taken up saying that Ciaran Harte is a real enigma - as in 'rock star in hiding'; and then there is a double page bit on Where's Lisse? as they interview themselves, try to be amusing, fail and say nothing at all. That aside, the In Embrace interview is interesting and the stuff on Steve Miro is an original profile - but the highlight of the issue is the infamous Hewick/Glass gig when the man with the pen goes wild with approval about the leicester-shire lad. And so - to Tone Death. The last issue emerged around Christmas last year, but is good enough to last till next. A meaty 52 pages, incorporating wit and a cast of thousands. A second Mark Perry interview to supplement AP7's revelations, enlightening waffle on Shriekback to complement the interview in these pages and an average Aztec Camera encounter to prove they're only human! There are odd moments that the TD trio should've realised were duffo - Apocalypse saying nothing and the Passage being pretentious, stand out like proverbial sore thumbs, in direct contrast to the SPK exercise; no doubt due to the fact that SPK have thoughts that are worth reading about and the others aint. (40p eight shillings well spent - from C Brownnett, 32, Manor Rd, Bishopstone Herne Bay, Kent)

No point in coming out with the usual crap about Fanzines being more healthy now than ever - there will always be a complete spectrum between genius and dross. Most worrying, is the steady growth of the bland middle belt, but problems of choice ultimately lie with the ever dwindling and indifferent fanzine buyer.

-Nick



Mentadent. It arrived in a strong and healthy looking verte, the elaborate non-box packaging ensuring me that I had a 'professional sample' in my hands - giving a similar guilty excitement comparable to buying a promo copy record! The wrapper boasted of an anti-plaque multi-tufting device with many airfix style diagrams to show the 'efficient removal of dental plaque'. Of course no-one would be blinded by mere pseud packaging, would they? Everyone knows that their 'filaments should be kept at a 45 degree angle to their teeth and gum margin' anyway... But onto the practicalities of ownership. The grip is one of the widest currently on the market, a definite plus for all you ape-handed buggers; tapering down aerodynamically to the in vogue mini-head. A vast number of very soft bristles don't augur well for a long life, but this is more than compensated for if you have tender gums. In the mouth it moves admirably, coping with the back four with consummate ease - although one has to allow an extra 45 seconds over some of its larger headed rivals. Overall a very competitive brush with many endearing feature, losing out only on economy, endurance and packaging. AP Award 70%

The Addis Blue is the sort of brush the people at Mentadent laff at over a cocktail or two in the boardroom. Clumsy in appearance, outdated etc., but like the Co-Op store it will always remain immune to the fickle consumer patterns that firms like Procter and Gamble owe their existence to. It's short, it's stubby and downright ugly; but when it comes to the tombstones, it leaves the rest for dead. A surprisingly quick action allows it to nimbly plough through frontal plaque, slicing across any expanse of enamel. It proves a trifle cumbersome when thrust into the deep recesses of one's buccal cavity, but with familiarity and care one can easily master it's little idiosyncrasies. Cheap, cheerful and here to stay! A real family favourite. AP Award 72%

Back into the lab for the latest from Sensodyne. My model came in a dobby brown with minimal packaging - nevertheless it's scientific heritage was immediately apparent. One's initial impression is of it's smallness, as though designed

by Rappaport's dad; but once you get it into your hand it inspires total confidence, to attack your interdental areas with aplomb. The skilled technician will revel in it's light head and stiff bristle, tempting one to go further into the realms of the unknown, bringing back plaque from the dead into the light of day. Very popular with girlfriends who stay the night, and looks set for another successful season in the mucky glass above the sink. AP Award 80%

Reach, On loan from Michael's modest collection. A consumer questionnaire shows how impressed he was by the small head and its aggressive aesthetics, which take some getting used to, if your in anyway conservative about brush appearance. You may have noticed the mammoth advertising campaign, aimed to show off its contrived individuality (the new romantic look) in the hope that your mum will buy it whilst daydreaming in the supermarket. The colour range is decidedly garish to say the least and probably won't go down to well with shift workers. It also has this unusual 'knuckle' which gives good thumb support, although the radical tapering of the stem leads to great stability problems. Michael has circumnavigated this by using a double handed technique when attacking deep. It would take a novice a few weeks to master, but once this specialized skill has been mastered it proves a very rewarding brush indeed. Altogether a little too brash for me, although the bristle quality ranks alongside the best. AP Award 74%

My antiquated Oral B-35 was probably left by some visiting American some years ago, but warrants its inclusion thanks to awe inspiring reliability. Its flayed bristles have a romantic appeal I cannot ignore, coupled with a very high nostalgia count means that every now and then I feel compelled to pull it out of the jar. Probably the first of the brush manufacturer to go for high-tech imagery before they had updated the design of their product, the homespun design showing clearly through. Its forte is the caps and even the tongue scrub favoured by Southerners, when used vigorously. It is also very adept at foaming one's mouth out with a massive overdose of paste, which can be difficult for the novice to control. AP Award 67%

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My Experience with Philip Glass

When I listen to music I try to have no preconceptions while I investigate new bands, musicians, etc. This is of course, impossible, but by trying to break down barriers like pop, classical, trendy, drone, etc. and hearing just music (even this is a limiting category that can be broken down or possibly expanded to art (small 'a') which I would define as the creative process itself); then an exploration on a more instinctive level is possible. I can therefore see merit in disco music with the blandest of lyrics, if taken in a musical context (energy/emotions expressed). I'm not defending bland lyrics in any way, but to dismiss music on its lyrical content is to approach music from the wrong point.

We all have our own particular areas of interest, but the trouble really starts when we entrench ourselves in certain ideas that lose all the spontaneity. As soon as we step outside our safe musical gardens, new fields and paths open up to be explored.

This is how I came across the music of Philip Glass. I had just bought 'Music For Airports' by Eno and I was playing it for the first time, when someone commented on its similarity to Philip Glass. I filed this piece of information away until a few months later, when I came across a Glass album in a market stall (perfect condition too!) for which I didn't hesitate to redistribute 250 pence. At home, I put my needle into the grooves and was hit by a barrage of notes, issued from a variety of instruments at high speed. This went on for over eighteen minutes.

Slightly stunned and bemused, I tried side two; which I thought sounded the same, perhaps a little faster, but lasting twenty minutes. I lasted about five.

A few days later I tried again and really listened to the music, beginning to pick out the simple phrases and repetitions in the compact sound. By the end of the week I was hooked and the eighteen minutes got shorter and shorter. I realised that it could go on for ever, like a trance induced by a Buddhist mantra I was becoming spiritually excited. My next purchase was the 'Glassworks' album, which has some

shorter, slower and sparser pieces, but still possessing the power to transform and shape the consciousness in whatever way it feels like.

As if by some mystical coincidence or phase of the moon, the Almeida theatre organised a New York performance season which included the only European appearance of the Philip Glass Ensemble. Needless to say, I didn't hesitate.

Outside the Sadler's Wells theatre milled the affected clientele that you expect at these chic 'we've got our fingers on the pulse' affairs as cries of 'hello dahling' filled the air. I had a spare ticket due to the non-arrival of a certain AP man, which I sold to a grateful Scot who had 'come all the way for this' on the off chance of getting a ticket. He was expecting me to charge him half his wage packet and nearly fell over when I only asked the face value (£3:00). Inside, the Channel Four film boom was swooping about trying to figure how best to record this largely static performance whilst doing their best to ruin it for the live audience. The six musicians appeared with their live sound mixer and waited in hushed silence for the opening.

The swirling tones of 'Music in a similar motion' (an early piece) lapped over us, relaxing us as the magic began. The mild euphoria created by the records is just a mere pimple on the excitement graph when compared with the mountain-caused by Philip Glass live. Forty minutes later we were sucking fizzy lager bottles unaware of the greater pleasures in store after the interval.

In the second half we were treated to the best of 'Glassworks' (i.e. all of it!) and a long section from 'Einstein on the beach', an epic opera in the true Philip Glass tradition about the great atomic hero. It was during the last piece that I felt my cranium lift three inches, so that the sound could directly stimulate my brain, by-passing my ears.

During the whole concert, but particularly at this point, I felt excessively good, bursting with vitality. The experience was one of the great moments of life, comparable to the realisation that real love can never die.

The Philip Glass Ensemble are playing here again in the 'Fall'. I'll be there.

-Phil



SHRIEKBACK

After some logical thinking by some of the newer AP staffers, it was decided that every band we saw should be communicated with, on some small level at least...thus our shriekback conversations came about as the first in line with the new policy. A tiring trip across from Bristol in the company of the most boring thumbs (budding University egghead breed) imaginable, was no real preparation for a bodymoving night out - nevertheless, a compact selection of staffers and their wives made the trip to the East/West Centre (originally an old school building converted to the contemporary educations of martial arts and healthfood consumption). Internal squabbles twist AP men spelt a potentially foul evening ahead but the presence of the ever approachable Barry Andrews defused all tensions. He had some minor difficulties locating the nucleus of the band, but this was overcome and a quiet classroom found for waffling.

Barry Andrews: Maybe we should establish what you know already, so we don't tell you things you know already...

* Well, all I know is that you're three musicians...and your histories in other bands... and that your records are bloody good!

David Allen: Fair enough, we'll talk to you then!..Well you must know how we started?

* Well, I know where you have come from and where he has come from and where he has come from (liberal use of the accusing finger!).

* You mean "the pedigree of the former members..." quotes a witty staffer who had just stumbled on a rival shriekback article amidst their belongings...such vanity!)

BA: Yeah, it's all in there! (referring to article quoted)

DA: OK, a potted history in two minutes.

BA: Go, Dave!

DA: I left the Gang of Four for reasons that have been well documented, but will become clearer from us three telling you what we are about...that will explain why I left really, cos it's that simple. I decided after a period of six weeks thinking whether to give up or not.

* This was when you were in America with the Gang of Four?

DA: No, this was when I had come home. I thought, is it worth it, can it be done in any other way. It seemed at first that it couldn't. That is, the actual music business and the enjoyment of it, I mean literally. People listen to music for enjoyment - but the whole thing gets really twisted. So what I was saying to myself was, that there must be some other way of doing it which isn't really horrible; band, musicians and audience or anyone receiving it, simple as that. And it became apparent after a while, that there was a way...

* When did you arrive at that conclusion?

DA: Literally after about five weeks, but especially after a lot of shit when the press started flying; it became... I don't think actually, that if there hadn't been a lot of hassle in the press and that, it probably wouldn't have got off the ground, because I wasn't really intending talking to the press. But I thought it was time to speak out and defend what I felt and therefore I started talking. Carl heard about it through Nick Launey, the producer of the last Gang of Four single I played on, as he had just done the Out On Blue Six single...

BA: He had also done the Restaurant of Dogs record.

DA: It was really strange how he knew everyone anyway. I'd wanted to get in touch with Barry to see what he thought, because I had met him a year earlier in Leeds, and we got this loose thing together with Emma Burnham and Brian Neville, who's now in Pigbag, and we just went down and did some demos. I got my publishers at the time, to pay for the demo time to sort of continue the contract. I didn't want to continue the record co's contract, but the publishing contract is a pretty important part to the whole band at the moment. So we just jammed for a while and then decided to take it a little bit further.

BA: We 'took it a little bit further' for quite a long time...

DA: We rambled for a long time...a good six months. Even during the recording of Tench it was rambling!

* Does that account for the diversity on Tench?

DA: Yeah, it probably is, yeah.

* It was intenchtional (it was mick, honest!)

Carl Marsh: No...(laughs disgustedly!)

DA: C'mon! There's probably nothing wrong in that...

* No, I meant intenchenal as in-tench-enal(labours joke badly!)

DA: Yeah, I know you did!(more hysterics and a red ashman!)I was trying to ignore that! It was probably a good thing at the time, and that's how it came out. But now we've got round to thinking that we have got to make commitments, to take responsibility and we have decided to do that. So here we are now, having taken a lot of responsibility for what we do and how we do it.

* Are you content with the way things are at the moment, that your not being dragged through the same shit as before?

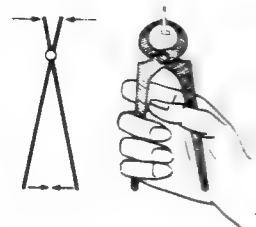
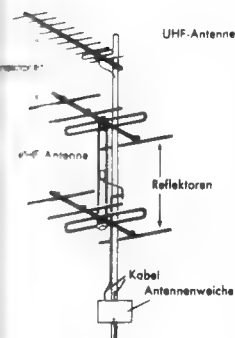
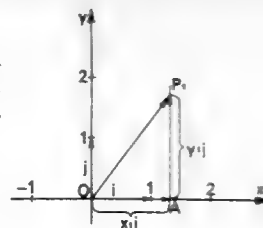
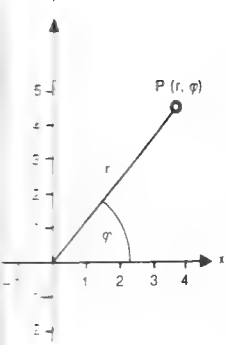
DA: No, we are very happy at the moment, definitely.

* Do you feel the same way? (to Barry)

BA: I was coming to the conclusion that it would be nice to do something that...Well my answer, when I left XTC, was never to get in a group, it never works in groups, etc... that was the position I adopted because of my experiences.

* Was it on amicable terms that you left?

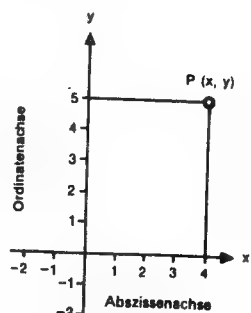
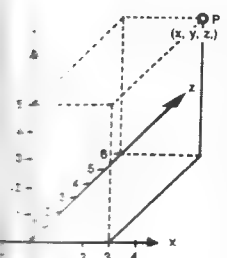
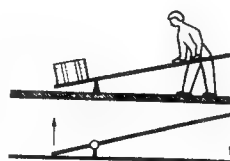
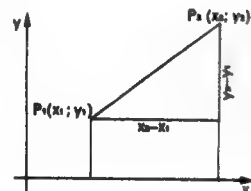
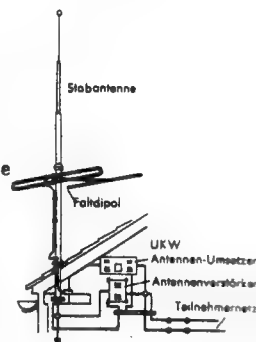
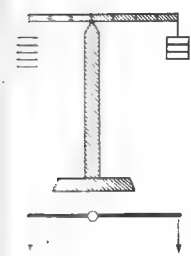
BA: No, not really. It wasn't amicable for the last six months I was with them. Not just between me and them, but that the whole thing was getting very leaden; like nobody was getting any delight out of it. I attributed it to 'groups will always get fucked up' and the best thing to do was to leave. So I buzzed around from one loose collective to another, without much commitment and really without a lot of...
 P (x, y)



Faltenwespe



Schnurwespe



in its first inception, was the same kind of thing, 'we'll see how this goes...hang about for a bit...' and we hung about for a lot. It became apparent that what I did want was what I had been kidding myself about, that I actually do want to commit myself to work with a bunch of people that I actually get a lot out of and that I actually get a lot out of being part of a group and I do like being a group member. It's something I really get a lot of satisfaction out of. Initially what we did in shriekback, was doing what any three people who don't really know each other do, finding a common ground and messing around in it; and we did that for quite a while.

* Was that just a musical common ground?

BA: Well, I mean anything like that. Y'know when you meet two people in a waiting room it's like what you talk about...

* At this point we are interrupted by a concerned technician who reported a comrade's accident rigging up Dave Rappaport's stage fireworks. In the explosion that followed he apparently went flying over the monitors into the gathering audience, who thought it was part of an act!

BA: What you hear on Tench was like 'how much longer have we got in the studio?'. I think what comes out of that record is like, a fresh approach and experiment. There's obviously a lot of stuff that doesn't work...a lack of commitment.

* The b side of the single ('Here comes my handclap') is really weird. You have to listen to it for ages to get into it.

CM: It's probably one of the most complete things on the record. It is the one thing that is most like it's supposed to be and yet has gone as far as it can. Some of the others have gone some of the way but then not had the push behind them to take them further.

* Shriekback music seems totally different from the musics you were making before and it's really difficult to understand why it has evolved that way.

BA: It's to do with the contributions that we each made to the bands we were with before. I noticed that with all the other groups I was involved with, especially with the League of Gentlemen and XTC, what I was doing was being 'the keyboard player' that was lurking in the background behind the frontman. I dunno...there's a certain amount of the work ethic involved in 'oh, I'm gonna do quite a lot here; I'm gonna be responsible for this kind of lead line that I've just made up'. So it got very fiddly and my concern was not the whole thing; whereas with shriekback I actually want the whole thing to sound really good and what may best serve that purpose is maybe not playing as much, in some cases not playing at all. Like, I hardly play anything on 'My Spine..', I sort of play a little bit of violin in the middle, but it only goes on for four bars and that's it. I like that. Really sort of...yet I'm still involved in it. Like, if I hadn't played on an XTC track I wouldn't have been on it, whereas I'm all over 'My Spine', although I don't play on it.

* What about your lyrics...They seem really strange, in that you cannot suss out what they are about even though you can hear the words. How important do you regard the lyrics?

BA: We write individually, Carl writes his and I write mine. I regard the lyrics like a snare drum part in that they might be interesting on they're own, maybe; but that's not how they're planned to be heard, because they are completely integral within the whole thing. The associations that the words spark off, stuff like that is like as it is meant to be heard within the context of the record, as, say, an echo of guitar.

* I think that the imagery that the words conjur up, particularly on 'My Spine' work really well...

CM: Thank you.

* Fair enough!

BA: You should ask Carl what he thinks about 'My Spine' as he wrote the lyrics.

CM: The idea was that we had this very much kind of a disco backing track and wow... (a pause for thought!) The actual line that came first, about my spine being the bassline was intended to be, like, you had this track and it was partly the standard disco thing of forgetting everything by partying; that you make your spine into the bassline, the central part of you becomes this physical noise that makes you dance - then you can forget it all. The rest of it goes away from that in a bit more of an intellectual way, I suppose extending the idea of not getting stuck on what has gone before, not being bound up by it but still using it and pushing on from there.

* How do you connect the lyrics, particularly as you both write, to the songs?

BA: What usually happens is that there's a backing track of some sort, which is generated totally randomly. Like what we are using at the moment is Linn drum rhythms. We get a Linn drum down for the day and...

* What's that? (dated staffer's ignorance to modern technology!)

BA: The Human League use one...it's like a sophisticated drum computer. So we hire that for forty quid a day just to fuck around with it, without the pressure of 'we're paying money for this' and we just programme this stuff and you get a dozen rhythms down onto multitrack tape. Then what usually happens is that Dave puts a bassline on it and quite often things take a character of their own from this point on. You can project an idea like a whole atmosphere from that basic thing, which usually finds its first expression in the words, and all other things kind of glue on from there.

* (To Carl) So you write the words for the music?

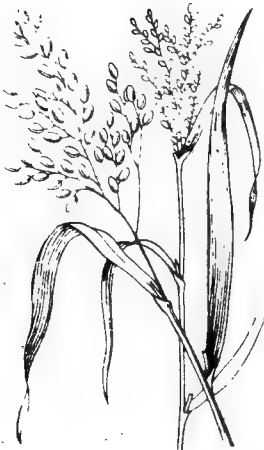
CM: Oh yeah. I find I have bits kicking about, the odd couple of lines that don't quite fit in or anything, and it's only when the music's finished that they fit into place.

* So the lyrics are like an instrument in the real sense of the word, whereas other bands tend to stick them on top.

CM: Yeah, but they have a validity on their own. But like any other instrument, if it doesn't make sense then we don't use it in the mix. It's like, you could take the drum part out of the mix and play it separately and it might make sense on it's own or it might not and the lyrics making sense apart from the track is analgous.

BA: Yeah, it's a completely different thing.

* Was this a deliberate separation?



CM: Yeah. There was a real resistance to playing live, because it's really like hard work compared to the studio, just on an logistic basis...and it costs more. Um, it's like, very comfortable to get on the tube and go down to KPM (studios) everyday, sit around and eat your sandwiches and record. Whereas this is like, fucking hell, vans and things, roadies and the whole scene.

* Is it going to be a completely different set to the records? (referring to the evenings imminent gig.)

BA: We'll use the songs off 'Tench' as a departure point, but really they have got no more in common than electric guitar and acoustic guitar.

CM: It's like we're almost doing cover versions of our own songs.

* So you start off with the music on the album then develop it, each performance being different, or is it worked out for each gig?

BA: Well what I mean to say is that stuff we actually play onstage is fairly structured, although there are improvisations; it's just that those peices that we play are created from work in the studio and so there is a basic song structure, but in the same way as a cover. But really, I get the feeling that what we do live is like if someone got up on stage and spoke to you. What you'd actually get would probably not have a lot in common with the actual words that were spoken, like you would get all these other messages just from the way the guy is, the way he behaves, his attitude...all these kind of subtle things that go on between people. And what we are about onstage is trying to get a full communication of us and what we do together. At times we get that and at times we don't...a catching of the wind sort of thing.

* When did you incorporate this idea into the scheme of things?

BA: Well we felt that whenever we had been to a gig and it had worked, that was the element that was working. Like when you can't pin it down to (adopts pseudo technician voice) 'the bass and drums were tight', when it was more than that, although that might be a part of it. There is the opportunity within the framework of people playing music to each other of quite a high level of communication and its really invigorating if you can pull it off. It won't happen tonight! (laughter)

* What about 'Feelers'?

CM: 'Feelers' is a lot less defined, sort of relying on instinct, but that was deliberately not too worked out because we had this track that was pretty wild and had a certain atmosphere about it, and I just wanted something that was quiet and sneaked in amongst the violins and things, just to emphasise that atmosphere. I think that lyric is more dependent on the actual context of the track than 'My Spine', which is much less refined.

BA: We put that track together more quickly than anything else that we've done and I think that it shows, it has a real freshness to it; I'm really pleased with it. We actually got it from the rhythm track, basically something John Murphy put down to a final mix in two or three days...something of a record! (inner band joke)

* Does Dave write any lyrics at all? (Staff eager to find out if Dave Allen's background filters through any lyrical statements (a la Gang of Four) in his absence, tending to accident victims)

BA: No he hasn't, but he may.

* I was trying to relate it to his leaving of the Gang of Four. I don't know the reasons as to him leaving, only he knows, so I won't speculate on that; but I would have thought that the lyrical side of the Gang may have been one of the reasons, the blatant political nature of what they do.

CM: I think it was less specific than the lyrics. They have that role which they have defined for themselves, having this political stance which they express in their certain way, which is the Gang of Four and they don't stray too far from it. And he got fed up with it because he had been doing it for a long time.

* Does he still...well I shouldn't really ask because he's not here! (laughter, as the rigid moral code kept by AP staffers is remembered and re-adopted!) I would imagine you yourselves listen to quite a diverse range of music...

BA: I always feel a bit weird when people ask me that, like, I go through binges of real delight in records.

* Of a particular style?

BA: Yeah. Sometimes it's a particular record, sometimes it's a style of things like... oh god...like buying all the Ethiopian nomad music, Balinese, Bells and stuff. And, um, disco stuff. Every now and then something comes up that we 'borrow' off Rough Trade...

* Can't do that anymore, unfortunately! Minutes silence, and all that! \

BA: I'm always wary of saying stuff that only serves some function for me. I really like it when people use our music like that; as a function. Like you come in and you want something to adjust the atmosphere of the room and you put on such and such a record. That's what I use music for, and sometimes I use it for the most vulgar reasons. Sometimes I sleep and othertimes I really listen to it. In interviews it always comes across as what your really saying is like a shorthand of your musical taste. (Never judge a man on his bare credentials!)

CM: Or what I'd really like to sound like if only I didn't have studio time!

BA: The last record I really got a kind of adolescent pleasure out of, was 'Shipbuilding' by Robert Wyatt.

* Really?

BA: God, yeah! (attempts double bass sound)

CM: I'm stuck on that Grace Jones track - eight minutes forty seconds of the Apple stretching song - brilliant.

BA: I like Tyman.

* Yeah. I saw you boogie'ing, so I thought you must. (On cue, the aforementioned support star ambles in!) And here he is...

BA: Hello Tyman - want to get in on an interview?

Tyman Dogg: Oh! These are interviewers are they? (surveying us with a mischeivious eye!) Does that make life different?!

CM: It affects us all in some small way! (soft sarcasm in the classroom!)





doing it interview with you? (To Mick)

* We're interviewing each other! (a pause for giggling)

TD: Have you seen the guy that plays the skinless drum? No, the drumless skin! (a lad worthy of note is this mystery percussionist, present on the Dogg's new lp, which would add another relevant colour to anyone's record spectrum)

(TD leaves and BA begins to play his new bamboo sax as the interview falls apart!)

BA: A diffident man! Are you all from London?

(DA re-enters with good news of our injured technician, before a last ditch attempt to bring order into the ailing chat)

* We were just talking about you...and the Gang of Four...

DA: Oh yeah. (not very surprised!)

* I was wondering about the lyrical aspects. Did you not see eye to eye with their view or did you think it was a pointless exercise?

DA: I did, or otherwise it wouldn't have worked for as long as it did. We all got on really well. But I think that the second album is a bit messy and then it started getting like, separate camps within the band, and once that happens it's really not worth continuing unless you can resolve it...and we didn't resolve it in the way it had to. Do you know what I mean? It was something that should have been shortlived.

* I often thought the Gang Of Four should have gone their separate ways after a pretty definitive first lp.

DA: That was what we had intended to do, but it just didn't turn out that way. It was just a simple matter of not setting up proper arrangements and agreeing what you're going to do. We in Shriekback have made clear what we are going to do as soon as possible. Before we embark on anything we know what we are doing so there's no argument. I felt that in the Gang of Four, we were going to split after the first lp, but it was just unsaid. So I had no right, really, to say 'hey, I thought we were going to call it a day after this album'; because it hadn't been made clear in the beginning, and until you have that clarity and understanding it's no good. We in Shriekback have that clarity! (Mick turned mid sentence, to talk to Barry about his new musical toy, leaving Dave effectively talking to the wall! Dave does a realistic Grace Jones and clobbers him as Barry plays a casual James Bond theme into the tape recorder!)

* Since the interview, the legendary pace of Shriekback picked up, managing to pull a whole lp out of the bag. Dave Allen's initial stirring rush of domineering bass-funk had wrongly pigeon holed the direction of the band's future, as 'Care' was to prove. A successful and challenging combination of the atmospherics of 'Feelers' and noises created by unusual instruments, with the bass set well back. But they now have a very flat sound, the vitality and immediacy of 'Tench' and the Peel session forsaken in their determined quest for better things. Not people to rest on their laurels, their music will ultimately be their victory.

THE GENERATION THAT REFUSED TO GROW UP

I MADE A RIGHT PIG
TAKING A RIGHT ON BAG
BUT YOU NOT GETTING
BY COSE, HAVE'NT HEARD
TO COMEWAYS YOURS.

VAGUE

EPITOME OF THE
BEAT OF THE
FROM U

The great 'lads' fanzine shows its flaws. Despite the fact that "it's pointless reviewing Vague", I couldn't resist the opportunity to hide behind my novice tag and join the legion of armchair critics across the country and pick holes in one of the great pillars of the indie press! I suppose I ought to start with the Southern Death Cult opus, all twelve pages of it...

"We're all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars", Ian Death Cult.

"Some people have stars in their eyes, some people want eyes of stars. They've been like that for years, they've been like that for years", God.

"Some people are fed up with being in the gutter and are devoting their energies to getting out..." Anon.

That conveniently expresses my doubts, but I'll go on. Can any contemporary 'subversive' pop band be worth 12 pages of Vague? I doubt it. So let's look for what they have to say. Like most people they are aptly vague; not managing to put their fingers on the reasons for their existence, mainly because of an unwillingness to admit how much they owe to that tried and tested formula of primal rock plus ethnic/gothic imagery. Always popular with Britain's elite 'alternative' youth! It's presented as though SDC are the band we've all been waiting for. A band that combine some concession toward contemporary conscience, but allied to the more important distinctive image, allowing us to come out of the closet and bring our 'subversive' fashion sense into the high street.

'Fatman' is not enough. SDC's early reluctance comply with the Rock Press (not a novel idea) resulted in them becoming 'press darlings' of our 'alternative' goldfish bowl. But it's all changed now - for SDC passed away, thanks to undetected 'frustrations & differences' - the new Death Cult are now fully conversant with the likes of the NME. At least Vague have given us the centre page pullout and the diary of 'Fuck the fat bastard tour' to reminisce in BCR fashion. NME also report this new Death Cult as something of an HM supergroup, although no mention was made of transfer fees! Elsewhere, Vague has all the makings of a conservative (small 'c') mag.

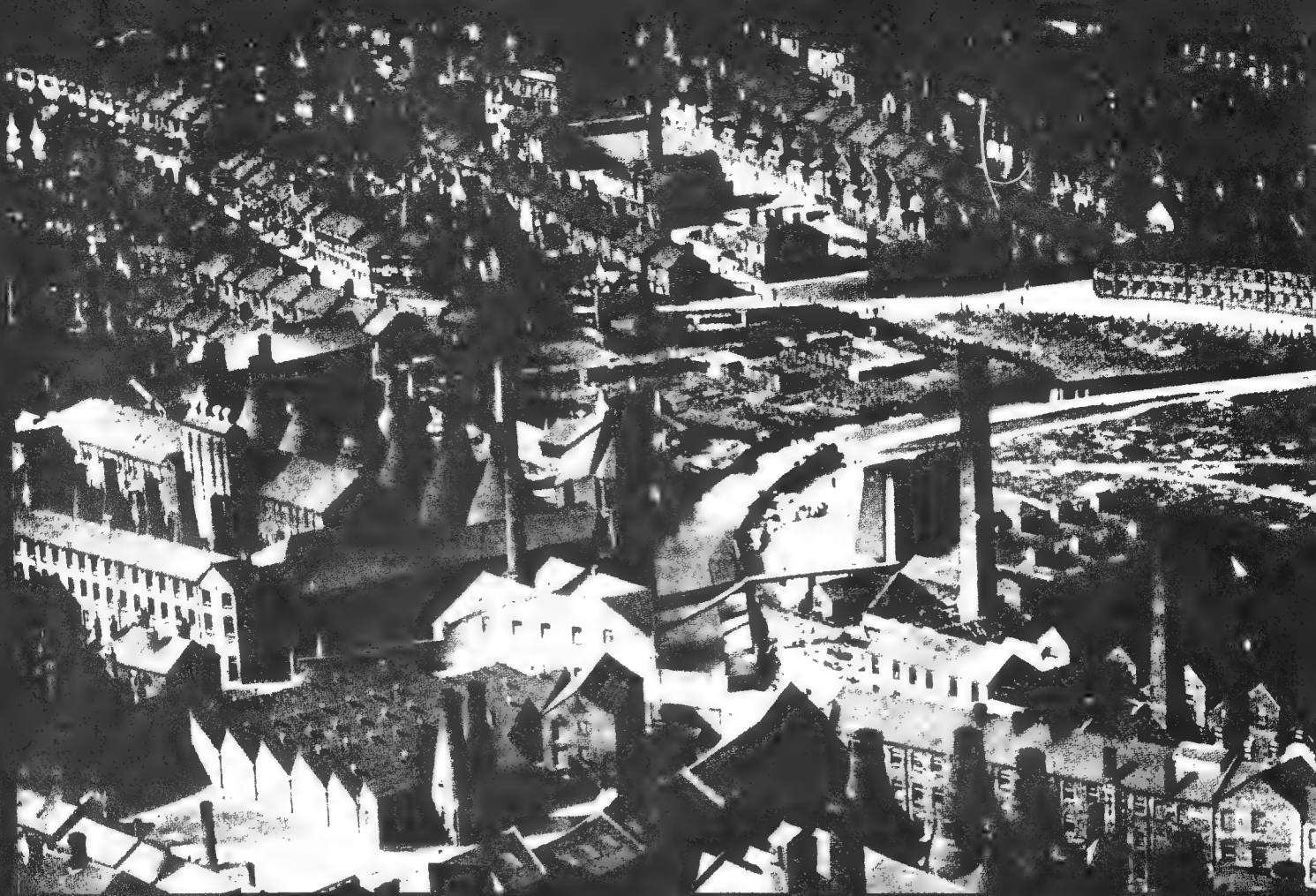
Mercer's 'obligation to duties' Dancing Did article smacks

of the old boy network - each patting each other on the back (witness the dull Iggy interview repeated in both Vague and Panache). They might as well be paid up journalists, cos they certainly act like 'em! Ironically this brings me to my favourite bit of Vague 14, Tom's swashbucklin' fanzine round up. It wastes no time in wiping out the 'small is beautiful' (and truthful etc.) umbrella that some fanzines hide under - perhaps Tom ought to read it. I question the preaching tone 'uncle' Tom has, as though we less able writers should avoid from now on our interests in "politics or fashion" and devote our attentions to "striving to be as individual as possible". Should a fanzine really dedicate itself to being 'chaotic'? It is this dimension of Vague's self conscious identity crisis that dominates throughout, the weird and wasteful pages of 'token humour' or adverts and band montages. Nevertheless, the spirit of what we are on about is captured in this article as moments are truly inspiring perhaps it should be framed and put on all fanzine editors' desks! Just to round up, I'm not keen on Danse Society's letter from Dullsville; neither am I keen on Chris Butler's letter from Fortress Falklands, although it's the most poignant and illuminating bit of writing in the whole issue. The schizoid ramblings of contemporary cannon fodder are frightening and I fear for Tom's safety against the ever growing bulldog breed of second rate soldiers. (Butler's not even on the Vague payroll!) research showed some of the offending Vague 12 to be pointlessly barbaric; equivalent to the new breed maybe - but that don't make right. The final point goes to the 'wacky' pages such as the montage at the back, they mean nothing to me, as do the centre pages that no doubt cost an extra 10p that could have been donated to some self conscious punk somewhere. The Escape plug, 'different for grills' and the pseudo adverts go back to the point I was making about stereotyped fanzine 'chaotic humour'. Hmm, well I've finished for now. It's still one of the few fanzines to look out for, although I couldn't help scratching below the surface after tripping over Vague's big boots. Don't be vague, Vague!

UNIQUE KNOWLEDGE ON NME

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griech. u. röm. → Tempel.
ante Christum natum, vor Christi Geburt.
Anteplami, Benedetto, ital. Bildhauer, tätig von ca. 1177 bis 1200.
Antenne, 1. bes. Ausführung eines Elektromagnet. Schwingkreises: a. **Sende-A.** zur Ausstrahlung größerer Leistungen in Form wechselnder elektrischer u. magnet. Felder (Wellen), die in der **Empfangs-A.** die Elektronen zum Schwingen anregen u. damit drahtlos Leistungen übertragen. Für den Nachrichtenverkehr im Dezimeterwellenbereich verwendet man A. mit bes. starker Richtwirkung, z. B. **Parabol-A.** (Wirkung v. Schirmreflexion). **Hörantennen**, für den UKW u. FM-Bereich.



THE CLEANERS FROM VENUS: On Any Normal Monday/Midnight Cleaners.

Being someone who regards the majority of pop music as an uninspiring, vapid waste of time, which too many people make a living out of producing, I wasn't too enthusiastic when I played the Cleaners From Venus 'On Any Normal Monday' cassette. The first track revealed pretty trad stuff; catchy love song of hum-along-to type with the odd smart lyric, and I prepared myself for the worst, dismissive slurs percolating in my mildly depressed brain. But lol! what followed was a touch of near genius, worlds apart from what had gone before - inventiveness and clever song structure greeted the listener on 'Monday Is Grey' a tale of repetition through dole and dull environment, wry humour and astute observations, so good I ended up rewinding to the beginning of the track. The subsequent material wasn't of such a classic standard, the diversity of the pop influences tending to irritate. However, the second tape sent to me after my enquiry, revealed the pop of CFV with added sensibility plus a wider selection of instruments - the result being a near masterwork! The brilliance of the slow and atmospheric 'Midnight Cleaners' opens side two; whining clarinet and quietly spoken commentary/alienation observation which reminded me of a mumbling Mark E. Smith on the North Will Rise Again. Elsewhere 'A Wretched Street', 'Wivenhoe Bells II' and others convey the more obvious ugliness and beauty that is suburbia, there is some strange irony in saying 'such things to accessible pop noises. There are the odd tracks of subliminal love/romance trash - yet this is the failure and this is the forte: genius amidst the lighthearted and the trivia.

The Cleaners From Venus come across as wise, witty and quite wonderful. The two tapes, despite the fact they owe their existence to 4 track/bedroom recording, are of excellent quality and virtually all the music could achieve chart acknowledgement if it were released through normal channels. It won't, not because of the fact that the lyrics are too astute in places to be accepted (which they are), but because Martin Newell - the man behind all the CFV ventures, is content to produce and distribute his work in the way he does, selling a few hundred of each tape. He wants no part in music business processing (something he's experienced) - duplicate them if you haven't they money is the advice that accompanies each 'less than the price of a single' cassette. When pop music, as in opium of our opinion constructed nation, is accompanied by such honesty and idealism as well as being clever, you can't help but be mildly joyous, even if it never reaches those it needs to. (£1.20 inc P&P from Man at the Off License tapes, 23 West St Wivenhoe, Essex, CO7 9DE.)

-Nick

ATTRITION: 5 track sampler tape (recorded summer '82).

Despite having their 'Fear'/'Devoid' flexi (free with Adventures In Reality issue J) savagely dismissed by two 3am AP staff one August morning, the band sent us a 5 track cassette recorded 6 months after their somewhat lifeless AIR venture. The band remain structured around keyboards/synth and percussion, and whereas the flexi suffered largely from poor production as well as unadventurism, the cassette is far superior. There is an air of early Cabaret Voltaire about what they do; double tracked vocals against percussive 'melodies'. 'Pain' and 'The Day I Was Born' are Attrition at their best, and its no wonder they are covered extensively in so many fanzines (this may have something to do with the fact that they are wonderful people, or so it is said!). All the songs are atmospheric without becoming cliched excesses, although the distorted largely indecipherable vocals can be irritating to untrained ears! The tape is available from Martin at 143 Moat Avenue, Coventry CV3 6BW for £1.50 + 25p (P&P) - the final track, 'Surge and Run' alone will ensure that you're not disappointed.

-Mick

AND ALSO THE TREES: From Under The Hill

A six track 'album' cassette ended up on the AP doormat a couple of months ago, accompanied by a note that apologised for the appalling quality of the enclosed promotional biography. Whether or not they referred to the standard of print in the aforementioned, and its inconsistency with the appearance conscious impressions given by the photograph and booklet; or to the embarrassing 'portrait of the artist as a consumer' - favourite this, that and the other, I can only speculate on. The favourite artist lark gives an idea of what to expect - and the Cure and Joy Division leap out from their particulars! Having got my initial preconceptions and aversion to such PR material out of the way (too many fanzines end up reprinting this sort of stuff without any investigation - a pure space filling exercise), I should make it clear that the tape is bloody good and a lot more diverse than my cynical preamble would suggest. 'So This Is Silence', 'Tease The Tear' and 'Out Of The Moving Life Of Circles' comprise side one, with the old thump, thump drumming and bass, sparse melody and guitar motives added here and there. If you like The Cure then you'll like And Also The Trees. The band are at their best on the first two tracks on side two; 'Impulse Of Man' and 'Midnight Garden', when they break away from the rigid confines of Curish format. 'Impulse...' is a taught, tortured noise; Sisters Of Mercy at 33 1/3 rpm, oft played angst inducing stuff - this is the route they should pursue. (£1 and SAE to: BPM Records, Music City, PO Box 40, Hounslow, TW4 5DH.



CHERRY RED Past, Present and Future!

Although Cherry Red have expressed great distaste at the much practised policy of hyping records (something which the originators of the 'honest record company' - Rough Trade have now begun to practise), their policy of maintaining a good rapport with fanzines does begin to look like some sort of alternative ploy; pander to the more conscientious writers. This could be construed as equally unethical, and perhaps it is, but most of the stuff that has been released on CR is so good it deserves not to be debased by all the traditional promo activity. Sending review copies to fanzines undoubtedly pays dividends, although some fanzines (AP included) prefer to review 'pure' independent material that otherwise gets shoved into some bland NME/Sounds gesture with umpteen other products (if lucky). The practise of sending out vinyl to virtually everyone means someone is bound to write something sooner or later either through guilt, or because the records are too good to ignore or because fanzine writers are a bunch of reasonable people. This presumably inspired Tone Death to write their Cherry Red article, incorporating a brief but interesting interview with Mike Alway. I decided to write something after Pillows and Prayers made its appearance at the end of last year - the sort of on the ball promotional activity that gets a nod of the head, because not only is it honest but it makes all the other miserable record companies look complete idiots. P & P is by my mental recall the third compilation on CR, the others being Business Unusual and Perspectives & Distortions - "an enticing invitation to kick away the crutches of preconception and familiarity in favour of judging music on its merits." Distortions was released in the days before CR believed (or realised) that they could do the same as RT and sell enough accessible music to get their name into the lower end of the charts. Of the 17 bands on the Distortions album only a couple remain on the label.

Nevertheless, there's a lot of good variety therein. Claire Thomas & Susan Vezey commence side one with over 5 minutes of fragile choral harmonies, followed in total contrast by the more orthodox electronic song structure of Matt Johnson, or the pretentious 'original' activities of the Virgin Prunes dragging what sounds like assorted kitchen utensils around the Douglas Hyde Gallery in Dublin. There is a lot of the contrived unusual on the album, some of it works and some of it doesn't, invariably the stuff that does is that which you're used to - at least until you 'kick away the preconception crutches'. It's an album that's bound to have been overlooked by yourself, so I suggest you take time to sniff out the contents, and make your contribution to the 'death of music' by taping that which appeals - likely to be found as the token avant-garde album in some associates collection! - Cherry Red before the Marine Girls, Everything

But The Girl takeover. Pillows and Prayers, the famed 48 minute cram-in-all-our-artists affair (for less than the price of a single) has it all. The CR penchant for the dreamy melancholic melodies of Thorn, Watt etc is well represented, material that exposes the trad love song crap, that inhabits every record box, for the superficiality that it is. Tracey Thorn's composition's on Distant Shores are brilliant, but there's something about Ben Watt's similar acoustic creations that I can't stand - some quirk of the voice, or too much of the old nasal! Elsewhere on P & P there's the lyrically clever but musically irritating 'XoYo' by the Passage alongside the undeniable genius of the Nightingales. Thomas Leer is present with the Simple Minds type epic-synthesiser pop of 'All About You', as are the Monochrome Set, still being pushed by CR with the recent release of a compilation album of session material and RT singles, and still producing very lifeless pop music. I was most chuffed to find that Ein Symphonie des Grauens, their best creation, vintage '79 danceable exotic originality was dished up on P & P for reappreciation. The highlight of the album is without doubt the cynical analysis of 'Pop Music' expounded by Quentin Crisp at the end of the proceedings; humour and sobering irony - "It would be hard to say whether the juke box caused the death of human speech, or the music came to fill an already widening void, but unless the music is stopped now, the human race, mumbling and snapping its fingers and twitching its hips will sink back into an amoebic state where it will take a coagulation of hundreds of teenagers to make up a single unit of vital force, which once formed will only live on sedatives, consume itself on football stadia and die" - take heed. With such comical pertinence, I turn to CR's current activities. The last batch that wound up at the recently sold AP mansions comprised a pretty dismal selection. A summery selection of heavy-on-the-acoustic-guitar strumming, all very nice all very chart aimed. Fantastic Something's 'If she doesn't smile' was the worst of the bunch, like a bad Simon & Caribuncle song, all wishy washy voices & nauseating lyrics. The B-side an instrumental that I thought was going to strum away forever! I turned to Felt to cheer me up - a band responsible for the excellent 'Crumbling the Antiseptic Beauty' mini LP, antiseptic would be an apt description for 'Penelope Tree' - their summer version - all so obvious. Even Eyeless in Gaza seem to suffer from the 'salad with too much lettuce' syndrome. It would seem that the success of the Thorn/Watt ilk has defined the future of CR, not so much in trying to emulate the success but merely to establish a safe sound. OK, so it wouldn't be fair to accuse CR of doing a Factory based on a clutch of duff singles, but their compilations gave a glimpse of assumed forthcoming delights, instead the spring cleaning has resulted in aural hay fever. -Mick Pollen Count 320.

THE COMMITTEE

The Committee, perhaps Harrow's finest bunch of musical entertainers, were interviewed amidst the seafood odours of their rehearsal rooms, a flat situated above a fish shop. The rich sea front odours meant the unused rooms were ideal space for the band to harbour their gear and make their bi-weekly creative noise, within walls decorated with inverted eggboxes and a selection of Committee artwork. AP has always had some sort of aversion to the obligatory interviewing of local heroes, but the Committee had rendered themselves valid to my ears with their second tape, entitled 'Resolution' (reviewed in AP7) and some fine live exploits. Someone from No Class fanzine, so legend has it, once described the Committee as a cross between Depeche Mode and the Pistols, presumably because they tinker on keyboards as well as play guitars with a certain degree of the manic. To me they've succeeded in salvaging the attitude and energy (ie: the goodness) from the punk ethic, and combining it with adventurism and a desire not to become a musical cliché; somewhere within there is a sort of Velvet Underground musical spirit. Suffering from a local audience too engrossed in the clan mentality of slogan and costume to appreciate anything mildly different or challenging, they continue undaunted and a third cassette is currently being recorded. Present at the interview were myself, Ray, the four band members (Mark, Adrian, Steve and Jamie), and Kim, contributor to the late lamented Urban Royalty, Committee associate and local dignitary, as well as being a fine tea maker to boot! As the supplementary beverage was served I sent the informal chit-chat on its way, with interview type questioning of the band's origins. The Committee have their roots in good-old 77 garageband activity as Mark explained:

Mark: Originally it was Adrian, myself, Steve and another friend who has now departed, we got together because we all had guitars and practised together because it was more enjoyable. We played all the first Clash album and material like that. Four rhythm guitars all together, just sort of thrashing away, and it grew from that. It was never a conscious decision to form a band. For myself, and I suppose the others, it was a sort of punk "get up and do it, anybody can" sort of thing. It just evolved from that, we started writing our own songs and eventually ended up playing live.

The bands first material emerged two years ago on their 'Agenda' cassette, a selection of their first songs, weak and self conscious musically, and a far cry from their current activities.

Mark: I suppose everyone makes mistakes, it is pretty bad, but only in comparison to what we're like now. At the time we were really proud of it because it was the best we could do when we were just getting our musical abilities together, we had absolutely no knowledge of recording.

Adrian: Without trying to sound 'ever so humble' we just really hadn't been that good, we had to struggle to get anywhere because we knew nothing about music. We never did anything easy, a lot of the early punk bands could perhaps play a little bit on their instruments to start off with, but from the beginning we didn't set out as a guitar, bass, vocals and drums line up, we all started by playing the guitar and had an interest in other instruments. So it wasn't like one person concentrating on their own instrument, we were just jumbling on finding out little bits of each other and things progressed from there. A lot of bands start off by saying, "you're going to buy a bass, I'm going to buy a drum kit" and they go off and practise and come together and that's it, whereas we were tinkering away in a very roundabout sort of way.

The topic of conversation shifted to recent gig activity, and Ray revealed that he'd ventured off to a recent performance only to find it cancelled. This triggered off a bout of Committee apology, and an explanation of the circumstances whereby the Harrow Art Centre (run by a bunch of artistic snobs according to Mark), an institution of notable bureaucratic credentials said no to the imposition of yet another Committee! The place had been used before by the band, when I was fortunate to experience my first dose of live Committee (and one of their first performances) it was a patchy but refreshing evening; these days its reserved for more sophisticated indulgences. The Roxborough (one of Harrow's many public houses) was also once the scene of many a gig, where Harrow's musical clan would gather to make a noise and the audience would carry out their '77 type roles instinctively. But the owner, a man into the profitability ethic, realised that these spikey haired punk rocker types were interested largely in the music and not his overpriced alcoholic beverages. He later claimed that putting on pub rock cabaret banality was better at bringing in the heavy beer swilling clientele, so the days of frequent decent gigs at the Roxborough were numbered.

Mark: We were originally very naively hoping that we could get a deal with the Arts Centre to put it aside once every three or four weeks as a regular venue for an event, but the way things are going that's very unlikely.

Steve: There are a lot of potential venues locally, all the colleges have got decent halls, and it would be really good if we could find some hall facility. The thing is most of the bands or those involved are interested in supporting your doings rather than actually getting up off their arses. I think Malice are the most interested in getting involved, but generally its not a very united scene, I still think everybody's basically interested in themselves.

Mark: Ideally we'd like to do gigs for free, but obviously that isn't entirely possible so we try and keep it as cheap as we can, it would be easier to do that if we had more control over where we played.

So what aims have the Committee as a band and as individuals I asked,

Adrian: Like I said, there was never a conscious decision to start it, we didn't specifically set out to change anything through music. Initially there was an interest in playing, I suppose there still is a certain amount of 'music for pleasure and entertainment' involved. Whereas now the songs have some sort of social character, I suppose they could be said to be political.

Mark: Personally I'm quite politically motivated...I'd sort of say I'm an anarchist. I don't speak for the others but I feel I have to comment on things from an anarchist perspective, and it comes through in everything. The songs I write are world observations from an anarchist point of view.

THE COMMITTEE

Adrian: I suppose there are parallels between us and the 'Crass bands', we see ourselves as anarchists making music rather than musicians making music about anarchy.

But how do you define anarchy, was the reply from one of the AP interviewers, a little concerned at Mark's unabashed self-labelling.

Adrian: It's not like there's any definitive answer... it's a very individual answer. I mean everyone's got their own idea of how things should be organised as anarchists...

Mark: I think you've got to start with the basic principle that you disagree with all rulers and all forms of government, because it corrupts, it doesn't do anything apart from control. It makes things worse rather than better. It's based on organisation from below, the fact that if people are left to organise their own lives in as small units as possible things work a lot better. It's a principle of being true to yourself.

* Mick: But do you think that's possible?

Adrian: I personally don't foresee anarchy coming in my lifetime, but I think what is more important is that you can still live as happy in this society as an anarchist, doing your best to be governed by your own morality.

Mark: It's a case of living your life as you believe, you set an example to other people, trying to get through to others in an attempt to make things better...

Adrian: The thing is people are very frightened of 'revolutionary activities' because it's like imposing your ideas on other people. I think it's better to live your ideals out and express them in every way you can.

Mark: That's it really, it's a way of living your life. As an attitude it's the happiest way I know of living my life. Everybody's not going to live that way, I can't see anarchy coming, but it's the only honest way I can see to live. And hopefully through communication of ideas other people will be affected by my reasoning. I see that as some kind of achievement, it's nothing great, but if everyone who felt that way explained that it's a question of one for all and all for one, and nothing like the classic misrepresentation of anarchy, of mindless violence and beating each other up.

Although Mark and Adrian seemed quite clear in their views, Steve and Jamie said nothing on the topic of 'anarchy as individual approach', and their quietness throughout the interview gave the impression that the Committee and its thoughts/lyrics come largely from the two brothers (Mark and Adrian). On the subject of anarchy I explained my belief that it's a question of personal morality and an awareness of the dehumanising situation - to have your own view on the basis of your own consistent questioning... What about the musical tastes syndrome, how much importance do they attach to a band's attitude,

Mark: It's a sort of sore point with me because I'm very extreme about it, I can't really accept a band if I know they've got a shitty attitude. It doesn't mean you have to name names (presumably a refusal to become involved in local backstabbing!)...there are bands you can like initially on just a musical level, and that's good, but to me once I know their sort of outlook on life it's pretty nasty, I just...

*Mick: Sell their records...

Mark: Well it's best to be honest, like Ritual (local heroes now defunct due to incorporation of certain members into Death Cult), it may sound like sour grapes, but I heard that some NME writer had classified them as 'rebel music', and I mean a lot of their lyrics tend to describe 'breaking power', and things like that, yet we know, and they say that they've got no political inclinations, it's just a bit of a laugh - they just enjoy being in a band and playing live music, it's just sets of words to them...

*Mick: They're prepared to go along and utilise the 'rebel' guise.

Mark: Yeah, that's the thing, if people play angry music, then the only lyrics that fit are like 'angry young man' type lyrics, "don't like the system, don't put me down...".

Jamie: No Class (local fanzine) summed it up really well,

Adrian: I think their point of view is fair enough, I can appreciate people making music on a totally entertainment level, but they should have more down to earth lyrics or not at all.

*Ray: I think it was a mistake putting the lyrics in with their tape (laughter).

Mark: But I think Ritual is a good case in point, musically some of their stuff like 'Brides' and 'Playtime' is enjoyable, and I can't deny that it's good melodic, new wave rock music, but I can't accept it when I know the attitude behind it.

*Mick: I agree, the thing is though if I rummage through my records there's hardly any bands whose views and motivation I support.

Mark: I think it's a question of degree.

*Ray: With a lot of bands it's got a lot to do with the fact that that sort of attitude and sound is in at the moment. The music is alright to listen to but it's not exactly inspiring or innovative.

The Committee's shopping list of endorsable outfits that followed (with reticence from each of them to state the definitive view) included the Fall, Raincoats, Cabaret Voltaire, Nightingales, Tracey Thorn, the Mob and assorted other Crass label bands (a recent postal communication revealed a belated Cravats awareness) - the pointless list degenerated into laughter... No doubt those who they consider to be doing something positive reside in their hearts. Although there's no real evidence that any of the names uttered provide any obvious musical or lyrical inspiration. Crass are one group of people they share a lot of empathy with, and at one point there was a Committee decision to visit the Epping establishment with view to the possible release of a Committee record through acceptable channels. This idea was dropped however when tales of hoards camping in the Crass back garden reached the Harrow band's ears. Although they showed admiration for Crass - putting into practice what they believe, they were cynical of the assured success of a record released on the Crass label and the way in which many people are as interested in consuming Crass products, and applying the name to clothing like an alternative trademark, as any other fashionable music concern. There is a sad

Similar to the way in which sincerity of attitude is mocked because of the acceptability/fashion aspect. The Committee are all vegetarians, some more obviously committed than others. It was once said that they wouldn't accept carnivores in the band; although when questioned they explained that because of the nature of their lyrical material a non-vegetarian would probably not agree to perform in support of such material. So what is the reasoning behind their vegetarianism...

Mark: I just think it's morally wrong to kill animals for food and other products when there are adequate alternatives available.

Adrian: And all the other arguments of the economic or health aspects just serve to back up the moral point of view.

Mark: But it's the moral view that's first and foremost. It's caused me minimal hardship, I don't dislike my food as a result of it and I'm no less healthy; if anything I'm more healthy. I also disagree with vivisection, because basically if you consider all life to be equally sacred, then live experiments on animals are no more acceptable than live experiments on humans.

Adrian: But having said that you can't deny that things have been achieved through the aid of animal experiments. I've got a friend who had a very serious case of leukaemia but he's now cured, and that's almost solely due to the results of work on animals, so obviously you can't dismiss that.

Mark: I don't think anyone would suggest you shouldn't use such and such a drug because it's been tested on animals or discovered through experiments on animals, but I still don't think you can justify doing even more experiments.

*Ray: Most experiments are not innovative or necessary and are only condoned because non-human life is treated with such contempt.

Mark: I think that's it really, they just have contempt for other lives around them and if animals weren't there they'd pick on other people because of their race or whatever, they just think the rest of the world's there to exploit.

*Mick: So you think animal experiments shouldn't exist at all?

Mark: Yes, personally I do.

*Mick: So would you be prepared to relinquish all products derived from animal suffering?

Mark: I don't think it would do any good to say 'I won't use this anymore'

*Mick: You could adopt that attitude towards vegetarianism and say 'well, they die anyway'- if you've been a vegetarian for 50 years it's not going to make much difference.

Mark: Yeah, but if there's a lot of vegetarians that'll cut down the market and it also sets an example to other people.

At this point I should explain that I too am of this 'fashionable' persuasion, and that despite my earlier reservations concerning the fact that in our lives rejecting the cog doesn't threaten the dehumanising machine, I regard the way we are encouraged to consume meat as another product shrouded in comfortable mystification, as the real objectionable aspect. The impractical (but financially fine for farmers into profit) economics of pastoral farming and the immorality of killing animals for food are secondary considerations. So meat as the most expensive component of the meal (-and consequently the most enjoyable!) is no more...

The band currently teeter on 100% unemployment (although Adrian is still at college) but they consider it an essential contributor to their creative activities:

Mark: A lot of the left wing go on about how terrible it is, 'bloody Tories, unemployment 4 million', they want everyone to have jobs, but what's the point when you're only going to end up exploited. I don't think it's a big deal about having a job anyway, so many people's lives are constructed around it to the extent that they go to pieces if they don't have a job, they just haven't got the ability to run their lives themselves if there's no job to use up most of their time. If you're employed then you're usually too shagged at the end of the day to do anything worthwhile.

*Ray: You've got to be very strong willed to stay on the dole, I managed it for 18 months but eventually had to bail out under pressure.

Mark: I do suffer from the same situation, you should have more unity. I'm not saying that it's totally wrong to work, it's just the attitude of school, work, retire, die. Most people on the dole get really screwed up about it. I think work falls into two categories, useful work and non-useful work, work that is totally functionless, like advertising and stuff like that. The amount of useful work there is should be shared between everybody in the country and planned, each one of us would have to work. The idea that people left to their own devices would, through their conscience, help in the worthwhile things that have to be done. But when you think about it so many jobs are totally futile, like consumer products, people just think them up to sell.

*Ray: But even in worthwhile employment, like my girlfriend has just started nursing and the money they get is just insulting.

Mark: That's the point, it's not that easy, a lot of people are forced into taking really shit jobs. That's the thing, you get dragged down as soon as you get one foot in the door as soon as you get money. I know it's easy to talk, but it just encourages you to become totally entangled in the consumer thing, I've done the same thing you gradually get sucked in thinking "Oh, I'll get one, that's a bit better", you just turn into a bastard.

As talk meandered on about the trials and tribulations of a DHSS financed existence, and the way in which the work ethic is a suppressor of the achievement of anything worthwhile, AP as one mode of creativity was mentioned. As far as expression is concerned the Committee don't see the band as an end in itself. Mark has written articles for Urban Royalty, and he mentioned a forthcoming piece on unemployment, which following the demise of UR could turn up anywhere! The Committee have the goods to offer but as is often the case, with fashion conscious ears pinned back for the nationally endorsed merchandise, their inspiring noise is reaching only a few.

MILTON KEYNES

Under the New Towns and Development Acts development corporations and local authorities have the powers to purchase compulsorily buildings and land within the designated area of their towns...

Sitting in the custom built cab awaiting the last sandwich delivery before blast off; the connection with the 8.00pm London train arrival already looking doubtful. The afternoon saw 40 winks in some sort of preparation for Milton Keynes and a suitable 'muesli-cassette' compiled, before the loading of foodstuffs and underwear. The time is 5.14pm, the conditions wet and the bats conspicuous by their absence. 9.16pm (a re-cap). An adventurous route uncovered the great British road scandal! Our tarmac'd heritage being ripped up and packaged off to the Americans. The original route of fathers was dutifully followed, complete with the characteristic hold ups on the most beautiful of 'A's'. The inevitable delay's make me fear for Mick's sanity, alone on the platform of mirrors. I hurriedly turn into the 90 degree road system (another leaf from an American book) trying to make sense of 'pure logic' routes and paths, trying to find a block amongst blocks (the railway station). 1984 is here - dead and motionless already!

The idea of the newtown was in response to the industrialisation of the nineteenth century. According to all shades of political opinion, the cities were places of overcrowding, poverty, crime, disease and potential revolution. These conditions prompted William Farr to calculate the first life expectancy figures in 1840. Averages of 37 years in London, 26 in Liverpool and 24 in Manchester lead many reformers to believe the future lay in the new settlements...

Michael was found in the early stages of newtown paranoia, the bats creating a mocking halo around his head. We make human contact, wondering if it is allowed here; but feeling safer now we are not alone in the soulless city. Immediately we begin our quest for clues. The rubber floors of the rubric'd station overpower like glue, forcing us to hold our breath whilst in conversation with the affable stationmaster. He remembers with us the start of the dream up north, in Runcorn. He warns of the many confusing and dangerous roundabouts that lay ahead, on our way to the heart of the Keyne as we bid a fondish farewell. Outside a homeward commuter from the Fishermead battery is tackled with that famous swear word 'Why?'. It appears her brain went in a quite painless and free operation, six years ago, and she "likes it now". "Oh! You've come to criticise have you!" DAMN RIGHT!

Robert Owen took over a cotton mill and industrial village called New Lanark in Scotland; devoting all surplus profits to the provision of social services, enlargement of houses, opening of co-operative shops and the setting up of schools for the kids in the day time and the adults at night; all this while doing his darndest to abolish child labour. This utopia of the 18th century was not recognised because Robbie was a devout atheist...

10.30pm and in a public house getting jarred, generally recharging the batteries so heavily drained by Milton's initial impact. Ashman plays the complex money grabbing bandit that echoes life itself, on the trail for 'infinite nudges'. It's all for theraputic purposes so I'm told, although I've seen some dubious marks on his forearms... I drink a bitter bitter with the characteristic inch of pop to maintain my youthful zest as we recap our evenings findings. A tour of the innermost Keyne revealed silent walkways as shopper and commuters alike consume their TV dinners, imposing their own sub-conscious curfew. Mick whizzed around snapping dream photos for forthcoming Simple Minds LP covers, whilst I conceived some sci-fi horrorstory until we were disturbed by some proles. Young Keyne girls in fashion's bright uniforms choked and giggled, high on fast food. An Ealing compatriot is in their midst although salvation has come too late, the dreaming had already begun. The kids birthdays are held in MacDonalds now - a plastic paradise of skinny chips, quarter pounders and thick shakes - sold on the dream before they can even think. A fatal mixture of paranoia and alcohol outside in the token village and it's public house proves too much as even I am tempted into the nudge, gamble, respin game of life...

...At the other end of the spectrum, we have James Silk Buckingham who's book 'National Evils and Practical Remedies' (1849) proposed a model newtown called Victoria, which would be built and managed by a Joint Stock Company. The innermost square of the town was to accomodate members of the Government and more opulent capitalists, together with the main public buildings. The otermost square would house the lowest orders...

The system is temporarily beaten as we go 60 pence up! We point out that Milton was the first place to have the new all black plastic TDK D's, phasing out for ever those lovable grey's: how apt it all was. Outside the pub a small dilemma arises, as we ponder the validity of stealing the pub's crisp eating canine for future nostalgia. Capture of the aforementioned hound proved beyond us so we returned to the vacant town centre streets for one last look before beddybys. I was just remarking on Milton's saving grace, it's lack of Runcorn type bus lanes, when some nasty engineer erected one right in front of our very noses! It was a horrific sighting so late at night. Despite all the planners efforts, animal life was still in evidence, in the form of giant mutant bunnies who defy

the curfew to come out at night and shit on the astroturf. Michael tried to replace the role of the reprimed dog with the largest of four legged cheeses, but his lack of pace was to deny him bunny capture. The evening's malarky drew to a close and a lay-by was sought. Out in the wilds, next to the comforting roar of the M1, we pitched the car and began to eat of humble provisions. The pre-veggy Ashman tucked into all manner of deadstock, ignoring the dried fruit supplied by mother, finishing off by towelling down with bona fide airline 'Wet Ones'. After a considerable shock at my extra case full of accessories, Mick bedded down. The condensation gathered on the windows as the anaesthetic air of the town lulled us into a heavy, heavy slumber. Would we ever wake up?

The rejection of existing urban growth patterns of the cities lead to a romantic idealisation of country life in the city. Ebenezer Howard came up with the Garden City idea at the turn of the century, which lead to the development of Letchworth and Welwyn in 1920. None of the previous utopias or experiments (titus Salt and Saltaire, WH Lever and Port Sunlight, George Cadbury and Bourville) had worked thanks to basing themselves on a single industry, suffering at the hand of trade fluctuations. The town's inspired by ideas of sanitary reform or architecture did not appeal to the industrialists or the public servants conscious of their financial responsibilities. Capitalism held the key...

Saturday. Dawn went unnoticed, as the AP boys under-went their cut price lobotomies to enable them to endure another day in the Keyne. It was the morning of the modern sabbath, saturday, the weekly day of prayer down at the supermarket for all the good money fearing folk. A modest breakfast of the remaining dried fruit and sincere orange juice was taken as the gb cassette gave the morning a retrospective edge. As we hit the edge of town we could see that the morning's celebrations were in full swing, the car parks oe'rfloweth, always a good sign for the reverend shopkeeper! The consumers grabbed their carrier bags and prepared to enter the chapel of love. No minutes silence here! We left the safety of the cab to find the nearest Crest stockist to remove the overnight buildup of plaque and halitosis. The it was back into the precinct to watch the money push and pull their way up the cities vulgar arteries on their way to the mega markets. We indulge in el-cheapo disc hunting in the mega stores after discovering that Virgin had a monopoly of sorts. We scanned for postcards of the gleaming dream, a task that proved more difficult than expected. 'Consumer Enquiries' had the cards, along with other wads of propaganda; Mick gave some hassle into the success of the Keyne, but they continued to staunchly defend all and sundry, that is until they cease to get paid for it! Headaches are brought on to all outsiders not used to the medicated air, but I manage to hold out from buying the Milton Keynes fatal drugs...

Many goals and objectives for Milton Keynes have been discussed and debated during the preparation of the plan and out of these discussions the Corporation has identified six broad goals which the proposals of the plan are intended to achieve. These goals are: 1) Opportunity and freedom of choice 2) Easy movement and access and good communications 3) Balance and variety 4) An attractive city 5) Public awareness and participation 6) Efficient and imaginative use of resources. Go and look for these things...

1.48pm. Back in the car taking great gulps of fresh air whilst writing postcards to the loved ones. Ashman acosts a discerning newtown offspring for warped entertainment (not the Fairclough kind!) getting the wee lad to write 'I'm like a newtown animal in a furnished cage!' on various postal communications. Back to the Post Office to ransack the place of any philatelic validity and pay homage to those William Morris textile commemoratives, the afternoon PO visit spoilt only by the woman trying to fob Mick off with a pound coin! Out into the enclosed space of the precinct to write more cards and pass the fatal deadline. A deja vu of a possible future life as Keyne cabbages enters our heads as a macabre warning, the electronic chime hitting 2 o'clock. The bat children with the crazed bouncing balls of last summer on their heads, stream passed. Metal fatigue causes a breakage, a bawling child and an embarrassed teenage father - all two minutes from purchase. Cards are posted to all corners of GB and to all gb's corners, before we try to find the exit. A mammoth Lego exhibition is found, complete with legitimate graffitti boards. A few minutes later, amidst all the football sloganeering the words "Why Wait For 1984 You Can Panic Now" stand proud. We leave the confused passer by, content with the impact of our final gesture. We pass MacDonalds for the last time, catching the sub-humans at their feeding hour, wearing their 'I'm proud to be a Milton Keynes citizen' T shirts. The young city rebels locate the batmobile and move out along the boulevards to the relative safety of aunties and uncles in Harlow, stopping only to look back in disgust at the symbolic 'nature' of the concrete cows.

As 'progress' moves silently on, eroding humanity as surely as sea does the land, we ask you to stop for a moment and look at the place in which you live. Just look. Perhaps you will begin to grasp how out of control our destiny is becoming. It is time to take an interest in the events and happenings that are shaping our lives. Go to Milton Keynes and get fuelled by some real dwelling shocks, for this is the future, planned.

-Neil

INDIVIDUALS--I

Anne Clark and John Hollingsworth are individuals and have chosen to perform as such. My first encounters with them and their creativity took place sometime last year, when Patrik Fitzgerald performances would often turn out to involve an intriguing set up with the artists involved performing as 'Ghosts of Individuals'. Essentially the arrangement comprised of a nucleus of four characters: Patrik, covered extensively in past pages of AP (if you don't appreciate his genius by now then you never will!); Kevin Hewick, a man who has dedicated his life in search of a spiritual love, the infinite problems of which manifest themselves in his songwriting, performing to narrow minded audiences and being too honest for Factory records; together with John Hollingsworth and Anne Clark. At this moment in time Anne Clark has just released a fine LP on Red Flame entitled 'Changing Places' featuring Vini Reilly and David Harrow who provide the musical accompaniment (inimitable Reilly guitar melodies and varied keyboard/synthesiser workings respectively), to Anne's simple, romantic and sometimes frightening poetic observations of failure in the human situation. John on the other hand currently keeps a low - bordering on the non-existent, performing profile, since taking up an employment appointment with a certain quaint old record label! Not as recording artist but as a cog in the workings. Concern enters my head when the creative element within the individual suffers at the hands of day to day mechanics, in fact this factor inevitably lead to internal 'Ghosts' disagreements. This interview was conducted in the days before the activities of the diminutive 'Individuals', as Patrik and Anne with contributions from a whole host of others currently perform. As individuals we are prone to internal disagreements...

So to the interview, conducted in suburban Tottenham, and miles from the London Transport tubenetwork. Here the subjects tampered with recording ideas, until the arrival of the AP party of three who contributed to an even greater cluttering of the interview room. Anne Clark, perhaps in some attempt to add to the incongruence of the immediate environs, proceeded to place a Kate Bush LP on the record player, this lead me to recount the time I cycled past a red faced Patrik Fitzgerald cycling frantically to collect his newly released 'Gifts and Telegrams' LP and minutes later passed aforementioned Kate looking casual in some large record company vehicle. Real individuals retain their integrity...

Anne: It's important to remain an individual in everything. The way things are at the moment is completely against individuality, not only within the noticable things in society, but everything. I have worked within a band structure, and found it very difficult, because somebody is always going to be frustrated because they're not going to be able to get across what they want.

John: Although we do work with other people and have a responsibility towards them, we are still strictly individual performers. But within the format of a group inevitably they let you down or you let them down, but if you let yourself down then you've only got yourself to blame. The main thing with the Ghosts of Individuals as Kevin (Hewick) has said, is that we try and create the right environment where we are playing which means running the evening as we see fit. People who see there is going to be a 'Ghosts of Individuals' evening will know that there isn't going to be a group on, they'll know that there are going to be individual performers. At the first gig we ever did together, at the Rock Garden, we got mis-matched with some American glam-rock pop band. And that reflects the general situation, the individual performer always gets treated really badly, because he or she is only a person - they don't take your sound check seriously and things like that. There is this attitude that individual performers or poets are some sort of musical polyfiller, and that they can perform while PA people change the equipment.

Anne: They tend to be very experimental as well, you give them a backing tape to put on and they think they don't have to adjust it or anything, so they start putting their own mix to it, putting echoes on everything. And they always want to put the cassette player on the PA desk so they can fiddle with your pre-recorded tape. If you try and involve yourself they tend to get really annoyed...

Other names that have been connected with the original 'Ghosts' idea include: the Sound's Adrian Borland, Jackie Levine (Doll by Doll) and Paul Weller. The Weller link stems from Anne's original involvement with Riot Stories (currently in a shambles as our hero pursues other activities). The tentative beginnings of the Ghosts idea began whilst Anne was writing material for Riot Stories, she'd known Patrik ever since his Safety Pin days, but as John explained things really evolved at a Duritti Column concert about 2 years ago,

John: At that time I didn't know Kevin Hewick, and I'd just finished helping Patrik get some gigs. So we were all there, and after Kevin had played his set I just wandered backstage and asked him if I could get him some gigs. Anne and I met through Riot Stories and she wrote me a letter saying that she liked my poetry and would I do a gig at the warehouse. The actual Ghosts thing was really born when I met Mark Julen, who's a Swedish promoter, at a Section 25 gig, I told him about Kevin Hewick and what I was doing, and he said would you like to come to Sweden. Then I mentioned Patrik and he said, "Why don't the three of you come?" This was in March '82, and it was whilst we were over there that we got the idea to make it a permanent thing. Although Anne didn't come, I saw her when we got back and it seemed a good idea to make it a foursome. The idea was to set up a situation based on equal performing rights, equal billing and equal money, it doesn't always work out that way, but that's the idea. To try and keep the whole thing fresh for ourselves, and for people watching we try and get other artists to come along and do things, not necessarily musicians.

The original idea continues in a similar vein, despite the Hollingsworth absence. Recent performances have included tapes of Jacques Brel (celebrated genius and one of Patrik's oft quoted heroes) and UV Pop.

As with a lot of young poets, their poetry seemed to have evolved as a means of individual expression - to escape from the oppressiveness of the school creativity ritual, and its rigid definitions of 'Art' and 'English'.

Anne: I started writing when I was young. At school I wasn't very good at art so I used to write little poems and things on the art paper, they weren't very impressed with that, but I found it was the best way to express myself. I've never really been able to decide what's the value of what I write, but at the Poetry Olympics people came up to me and said that they were glad I'd said what I had because they felt the same but found it difficult to express it. The really sad thing in life is the lack of communication between people... you walk along the street and you'd like to speak to people but you haven't got the nerve, you can't even acknowledge each other - it's terrible - it's just getting worse and worse. My songs are certainly pessemistic as you say, but I just can't accept the world and that everything's rosy and fine; and if people are going to turn away and refuse to realise that then it's not going to get any better, it's just going to get worse...

John was more jocular about the beginnings of his creative activities, but the same insecurity was the underlying factor. The desire to timidly shout, to make a statement about what seemed wrong...

John: ...I've been an arrogant poser ever since I was born - I suppose it all goes back to school, which as everyone knows is the biggest graveyard, I mean we all died at school. I used to be mad on John Cooper Clarke, I used to follow him everywhere religiously - well it was credible in those days! When I first discovered him I thought, "this is something I can do". I was quite good at using words and I started to write near carbon copies of the things he was doing; like when you join a punk band you do Pistols cover versions, well I was doing cover versions of John Cooper Clarke poems! and getting up and doing them in pubs and clubs in Liverpool. Despite the unfavourable responses I just carried on doing it and won this Merseyside poetry thingamajig of all things - although nobody could believe that I'd actually won; that's how everything really got going. I got this thing in the Echo: "John Hollingsworth blah blah blah blah..." and my headmaster saw it, and his reaction was something like (in authoritarian headmaster voice) "Ah, Hollingsworth, pleased to see you're actually doing something worthwhile" - he didn't even bother to read the poems and never came to see me perform at this anarchist collective I used to go to. Anyway they got me to do this school poetry parent's evening - I was like John Cooper Clarke reincarnated, swore my head off for about 15 minutes, then got physically dragged off stage.

That's how my poetry really started, then I got involved in various bands because in those days if you had a bass guitar you were automatically in a band regardless. Eventually I left, came down to London, carried on writing whilst at college and then got in touch with Anne and others. It was really a disillusionment with college that lead me to really start writing again. The things I sing about are all personal things that have happened to me, so I take the experience and I write it in all sorts of different poems, but for the songs I try and break it down to the most simplistic a form as possible and present it as something that everyone can associate with. Even after that I sometimes explain more about them before and after so everybody knows what's going on. I like to extend the performance situation to a sort of friendly chat thing. I'd much rather there was involvement because I don't like that distance between performer and audience. From the material I write I can look back at past relationships and see that the biggest fault has been a lack of communication of one sort or another, either sexually or otherwise. I always feel really humble in front of women, I was dominated too much by my mother, being the only boy in the family, and I had too many sisters... too many aunts and not enough uncles. I am a great admirer of women, I think they are a lot more intelligent than men, they're stronger in the things that matter, they live longer, they make better friends than men - the list goes on like that... there are a few things we are better than them at (laughs) like better drummers and better guitarists.

Whilst John continued listing the superiority attributes of the female gender, and claimed they made better politicians than men, Thatcher's name was incanted by one observer in an attempt to discredit the latter case. His material is performed in a very open, 'bearing the soul' way, and topics that are normally held as taboo are given an airing that leads to the audience experiencing a visible personal embarrassment. I told John that such honesty was comforting in a time of smugness and arrogance as a means of protecting the self.

John: If you can see that then obviously I've achieved something. But the reactions can extend to people actually threatening me with violence, saying "this is a rock venue, you don't come here to talk about your sex problems". Everyone tries to pretend they're sexually aware and liberated. I feel that people involved in sex ought to be able to get together with a limited amount of embarrassment and just talk about it.

But isn't there a danger that such songs can serve to perpetuate the importance attached to sex in a relationship I asked;

John: I think sex is as important as any other aspect of a relationship, although all too often it becomes an excuse for a relationship. I personally find it to be important almost in a spiritual sort of way.

Anne: Sex is often one of the reasons why relationships fall apart. It's an easy thing to blame when really it's a question of all round communication.

John: I think if there were a greater sexual awareness through communication there would be less split ups and less heartache all around. I know that sounds really moralistic, but I don't mean it to be so. I think there is still this huge block, I don't think I've solved the 'problem' but I do feel as though I have occasional flashes of insight. But 'sex' is only one small aspect of relationships that I write about - really it all boils down to the insecurity through inability to communicate or relate.

Anne: I've not felt secure with anybody or anything. I don't think I ever will, but that's my problem. I don't want to come across as being on a stage and saying "please feel sorry for me!" I just want to be able to relate to other people who feel insecure. To most people it's a weakness that they refuse to acknowledge.

John: The way we're talking it might sound as though we're trying to change the world or something. I think we, more than anybody else, realise sometimes what a pathetic kind of 'show' thing we put on and how hopeless it all is.

Anne: I don't think what I write achieves anything for myself really, it doesn't make my world or my situation any better. But I feel that if I can create some communication between people then it must be worthwhile.

Anne's attitude, which is one that I endorse, is a far cry from the 'sounds of escapism', always popular, and now and again given an intellectual dust up by the soul-less writers in the weeklies. Such lyrically bland music may have its place in any vinyl pile, but the real valid stuff is that which inspires either musically or lyrically - and it happens that to effectively do that you've got to be aware, cynical and negative (to different degrees) because

most of the time there isn't a great deal to be joyous about. Like Patrik, Anne's observations show an intuitive awareness of the inadequacies and dilemmas of the self and personal interactions. The insight, combined with humility and an ability to honestly express what we are encouraged not to, are what places their music above the rest,

Anne: I do a poem called 'They', based on my experiences of doing volunteer work in a mental hospital, and it's just about the pathetic 'ghosts of individuals' that there are floating around there. At one performance someone came up to me and said "What do you have to say things like that for? You shouldn't say things like that". That really surprised me, the way a song could create such a reaction in somebody, it shows how mental illness is still such a taboo subject.

John: One song that's never off my turntable is Patrik's 'Grey Echoes'. I meet and see a lot of other people not just in music but in a lot of other artistic pursuits, in all spheres of life people are trying to do things. On a day when it's wet or cold; or you haven't seen someone; when it all hasn't happened on a day - which is nine days out of every ten, that song sums up exactly that we're all just desperate people in this place really, all trying to make a go of something or other. I don't know if that song of Patrik's makes me feel any better.

Anne: I think it's the strange sort of comfort that you experience when you realise that somebody else feels that horrible emptiness. That's why I think he's such a brilliant songwriter because his material is so simple, but it's so - ughh (Anne groans, a verbal gesticulation due to inability to express)... it hits you right there.

The conversation veered off into acute Fitzgerald praise (which due to the AP policy in this issue of not devoting the usual vast amounts of space to the man, will have to go unexplained). I mentioned the old Ashman ethic of being able to relate to someone and the honesty behind what they do before any respect can be offered. The bursting of various bubbles upon the realisation that certain people and institutions encountered on the AP road aren't worth what I once thought they were; the disillusionment as those you have faith in reveal an arrogance of the 'you aren't important nature'.

Without a cut throat competitive attitude, which Anne, John and a great many other performers lack, success will never be in the traditional rock star guise of TOTP, DJs who drop the name amidst their patronising trivia and 12" records at the price of a single. The desire to make music that people really get something out of, music that makes others think for themselves, is the attitude that really matters... The talk of success ground to a halt, as the room filled with the remaining house occupants, "Top Of The Pops in two minutes" uttered somebody, and minutes later the mimed images filled the room. My attention was somewhere else, - the mighty power of the coporate musical sedative had terminated the AP interview.

Poets Turmoil Number 364

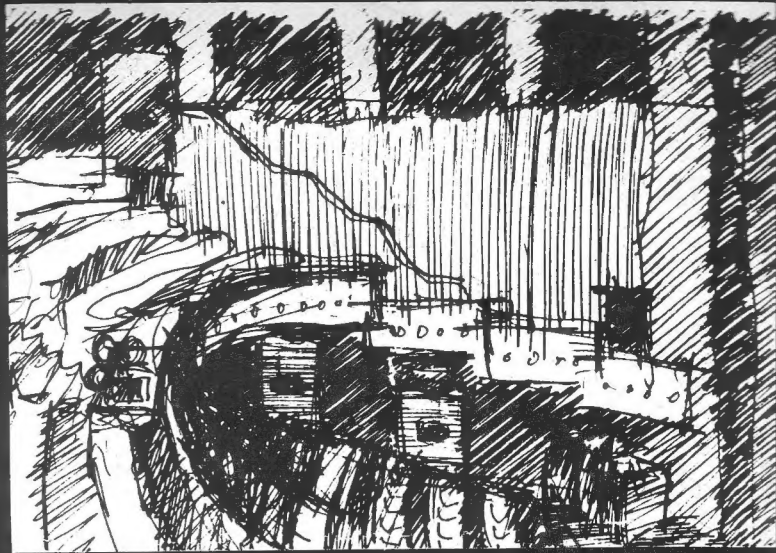
Keep me back in the real world
From which we try to run
Music and words don't mean anything
Through the barrel of a gun
A poem cannot heal a wound
Books won't help you find
That something which you're searching for
But just add questions to the mind
Tell me now in black and white
What you're supposed to do
When fists and knives and sticks and boots
Come raining down on you
A painted picture on a wall
Can't justify a life
When the weak and poor cannot escape
Their ugliness and strife
The actor is a bridge of words
Leading us to nowhere
Dressed in costumes to disguise
The reality of despair
The poets turmoil strikes again
As once more words they fail me
Another bomb has just supplied
The cross on which to nail me

Words by Anne Clark
Red Flame/Virgin Music Ltd.

NEW ORDER the Graffiti Club,

Two complimentary tickets for the opening night of the infamous 'Graffiti Club', down Wetherfield way, mysteriously appeared on the AP desk not long ago, apparently sent along with the compliments of that controversial weekly, the Wetherfield Gazette. They apparently have their fingers in the pie regarding promotion of this new Manchester hot spot and had somehow manipulated Salford hermits, New Order, to play the opening night. No doubt excited by the esotericness of the venue and no doubt prodded by Wilson's dubious Granada connections, the deliberate word-of-anus publicity machine was set in motion. Us reporters thumbed up to the 'Belt of Beauty' (a geographical term) in the random company of a dull ball point pen salesman and his yarns of the trade. Did you know "that the sales of De Lux red ink biros outstripped that of black biros by 22% last month?" Not many people know that. Wilson had deliberately left the rain machine on overnight, so as to really set the scene; but fortunately we had remembered our trench coats (circa 79/80) and United scarves, keeping us warm and dry as we struggled with the A to Z and the local dialect. Eventually we found the area, despite the fact that Wetherfield doesn't seem to be on any map, but had to climb a large wall to get to the local. We enjoyed a swift pint of the local brew, Newton and Ridley they call it, served by a bizarre barmaid of titanic proportions and limited dress sense, epitomising the diversity of the natives. Time moved on, so we supped up and head across the street for the club. There was some disturbance outside, seemingly centred around some pudding protesting against the noise. You know the type - a youth club organiser cum armchair socialist always sticking his egotistical oar in. Once inside, the new Staff were eager to please and I could have sworn that I had seen one of them on telly somewhere. Still, after the support band had been booted off the theatrical wait for the headliners began. Luckily I had brought my pocket chess set with me, which we placed on some beer sodden table so as not to lose me pawns. The customary shuffle to the middle indicated that the band must be onstage, someone lit a match enabling us to make out the legs akimbo stance of that characteristic bassist of theirs as they moved swiftly into a well known hit of the day, bringing a great cheer from the afficianados. All looked set for another 'epic' gig when suddenly everything ground to an abrupt halt as all the onboard computers and backing tapes slurred to a standstill. As the band rushed to the changing rooms a great commotion was taking place as the sly promoter figure and his henchmen/councillors put the proverbial boot in on that pudding we had seen outside. It turns out that he had deliberately shorted the House electrics in some sort of protest, "pulling the plug on a fine evening's entertainment" to quote a miserable punter. All was not lost tho', as the promoter reluctantly had to hand out refunds to all concerned. As we got our tickets for nought, we made £5.50 each - for a good charity of course!

-Neil

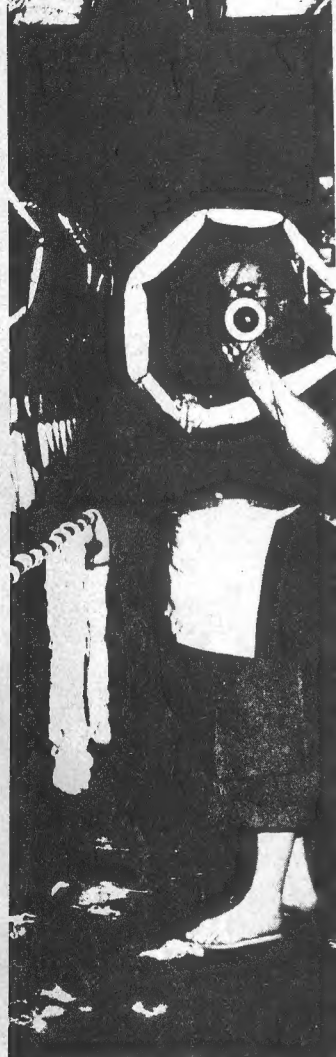
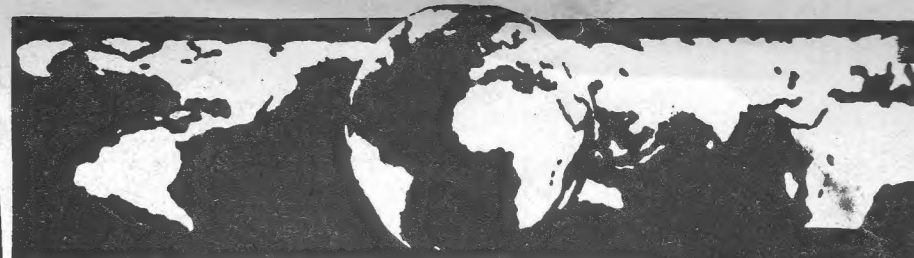
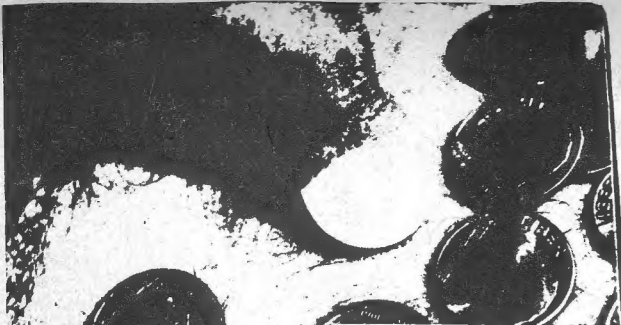


23 SKIDOO Bloomsbury Theatre,

A decision to stay in the Kapital to see 23 Skidoo amongst other personal pleasures was a relatively easy one. The last Skidoo encounter was at Trinity, Bristol during May'82 when the fetish elements were beginning to bear fruition (particularly on the Tearing Up The Plans EP). I was under the impression that it was a fairly elitist low publicity New Order job of old, which coupled with the nature of their new Crepuscule LP lead us automatically into jovial egghead/bonehead discussions! We decided to leave AP, to sell, behind fearing the egghead intellectual contingent wouldn't be able to relate to a 'mere pseud mag'! In retrospect this was a ridiculous notion - but we live and learn. Due to tea complications our party of three arrived a trifle late at the Bloomsbury Theatre, missing the first film; we chatted to staff, finding out that downstairs was 'sold out' and that the film we missed was 'very pretentious'. Not feeling any better for missing it, jars of barley wine were ordered (peripheral drink for a peripheral venue) in preparation for intellectual stimulation. The first part of the evening incorporated a performance by the Mantis Dance Company accompanied by a smattering of Skidoo's for percussion purposes. Being brought up on more 'traditional contemporary music' and the usual gig atmosphere it was difficult to adjust my inbuilt focus from the percussionists to the performers, which is a characteristic worth pointing out to the 'orthodox' rock fan. A symptom of the fact that as soon as you relax in an area or environment that is comfortable, then it is time to change. I found the performance difficult to translate into my personal language, but isolated parts were stimulating in their own right... Masks with face images on front and reverse of the head gave normal forward direction an ambiguity, whilst physical contortions and interplay between the two central dancing characters had me tensing my body in some strange sympathy. My personal interpretation was of mental conflict expressed in the physical sign-language, the climax coming with the breakdown of one party, the pieces of which were scraped up and saved by the onlooking beggar types, who were void of their own valued relationships. An interval gave time to reflect and sketch a remarkable scene from the balcony, before another film entitled 'Asbestos and Mud'. The swirling images were awkward to receive due to the cut-up surgery performed on the cine, jangling one's 'rods and cones' to their limits. But next up were 23 Skidoo, with familiar backing taped intro's and complimentary slide effects. A surprisingly 'rock' orientated beginning, probably enhanced by the evening's proceedings, nevertheless the heavy bass sound was perversely enjoyable. A spoken request for some sort of communication from one bandmember was deliberately confused by the crosstalking, cross-purposed ranters, leading to an artificial flare up, which ironically created the best sound of the evening as a large industrial spring was booted across the stage colliding with a mike. Undiluted Skidoo lasted only minutes, before they accompanied martial arts experts doing their thing. All very spiritual no doubt, but I find latent violence distasteful. It wasn't long before the cameras were rolling again, projecting the sound and vision of the 'Thundering Mantis!'. The complete journey from egghead to bonehead entertainment had now taken place, as we endured 90 minutes of a chinese Micky Dolenz chopping and screaming his way to a bitter climax of revenge and mega death, oriental style. What does it all mean?

-Neil





Do you experience nightmares or do you live in one... Last night I went to a theatre adaption of 'Cabaret' - an amateur production that didn't pay homage to the 'celebrity as valid performer' syndrome, but proceeded to scare the shit out of me far more than the film version did. Seeing live people wearing Nazi armbands and giving the macarthe arm salutes, regardless of their acting role, is so near to the bigotry and violence that is Fascism, it just made my blood run cold. This is the real horror movie stuff, add a touch of gratuitous comedy and innuendo, and you allow the people to laugh at their own fears, their own impotence. It's the manipulation that hits home, the gullibility of people, how easily they offer up their own meaningless lives for the self importance of the fascist reward. If you have seen the film, you'll recall the beer garden scene, where patriotism takes one small step into Fascism. OK, this isn't meant as a review of the film or play; I'm meandering about in an attempt to convey the dangers of ignorance and impartiality. Anyway, on my return from the play I wandered through the mumbling crowds of smug British theatre goers, leaving one pool of latent fascism for another, as I had arranged to meet some friends. I walked into the Pub and felt the same fear as earlier, only this time I realised I was living in the nightmare. Funloving adolescents out to enjoy themselves at any cost, a routine Friday night's piss-up inflating their ego's in the only way they have been taught - sex. It was a real 'if looks could kill' situation; all sorts of boneheads dressed in their own uniforms. Thugs with quiffs - dyed for authentic individuality - thugs with leather jackets, band logos meticulously reproduced on the backs, thugs with facial hair and denim - people really do relish leaping into these media created pigeon holes, all they need is a leader with the powers to manipulate and they'd be anyones. I wandered through the hoardes, throwing gratuitous apologies at those I came into physical contact with and kept my eyes pointing down to avoid any conflict. No sign of associates, they'd probably suffered the same experience and left. I made my way to the door and walked to the bus stop, passing two young policemen who looked at me as though I deserved some sort of physical malpractice. It dawned on me that violence is everywhere, no difference between our contemporary youth and those who sort them out if they get a bit frisky. By the time I got on the bus I was in a heavily depressed state; no solution to this mass mentality - people frightened of their own selves, their own freedom of thought, expression or whatever. As the bus stopped at a ring of the bell, half a mile from my destination, tens of youths came thundering down the stairs as though indulging in some 'make lots of noise as you leave the bus' party trick. I could see the driver in a state of panic as he was about to move off. One of the more evil members of the group leapt on and started thumping a young bloke sitting behind me. They could have only been 16 or 17 but I just sat there pissing adrenalin, wondering whether or not to intervene in this 'statement of conclusion' of the nights proceedings. Those outside the bus banged frantically on the window and by the time the sick reality of the situation had registered itself with my decision to stick my neck out in the name of pacifism, the bloke dealing out the violence left the bus, returning to the high esteem of the others waiting outside. The driver wasted no time in moving off and a bloke sitting next to me moved toward the victim at the same time as I. We tried to encourage him to remain on the bus and get off at a hospital nearby, but despite his blood and bruising he was obviously embarrassed at the thought of requiring medical assistance. Courage in defeat - we can all be heroes. I sat there in a state of shock, frightened at my own impotence in such a situation. I remember running home from the bus stop with the need to convey inside me. Upon my arrival, the nightmare was grinning at me in a different but equally victorious format, albeit a marketable one - contemporary American street wise action, as macho men prove themselves in a survival of the fittest. Life as a Quinn Martin Production gets closer everyday.

-Mick

